

April 22, 2022

To: Bailey Dvorak, Division of Medicaid Services
From: Jordan Wildermuth, Senior Government Affairs Manager
Re: Section 1115 Postpartum Coverage Waiver

Ms. Dvorak,

On behalf of the National Service Office (NSO) for Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP) and Child First, we write in support of the Agency's intent to submit an application to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), requesting a five-year Medicaid 1115 Research and Demonstration Waiver to allow the state to extend postpartum Medicaid coverage from 60 days to 90 days for birthing people whose household income is above 100% of the federal poverty level (FPL). While we support this initial action to help improve maternal health and addressing disparities in outcomes, extending postpartum coverage for an additional 10-month period would have more meaningful results.

According to the 2016–17 Wisconsin Maternal Mortality Report that was released this month, most pregnancy-associated deaths occurred postpartum in 2016–17 (75% overall, including pregnancy-related deaths), with approximately 73% of pregnancy-related deaths occurring postpartum and many of those occurring after the 90-day postpartum period. From this analysis, the Maternal Mortality Review Team identified most often that in order to address this issue, policymakers should expand Medicaid eligibility for all postpartum people to one year post-delivery.

NFP knows that healthy, strong mothers mean healthy, strong babies and children. Extending Medicaid coverage for postpartum women for an additional 10-month period would help women access the care they need to address health concerns well after their pregnancy ends and improve the ability of Medicaid to provide services like home visiting.

The transition to motherhood can be particularly challenging as many are socially isolated or are experiencing severe adversity. These barriers can lead to unsafe gaps in coverage.

Extending Medicaid postpartum coverage:

- **Improves Continuity of Care and Care Coordination.** By extending the Medicaid postpartum coverage new mothers do not have to switch from providers.
- **Aligns Continuous Coverage for both Mother and Baby.** Extending the Medicaid postpartum coverage period ensures continuous coverage for both mother and baby, improving care coordination for the mother-baby dyad and creating administrative efficiencies for the state at redetermination.

- **Improves Maternal Health Outcomes.** Access to health insurance increases access to and use of health care services and improves health outcomes
- **Improves Child Health Outcomes.** Parental enrollment in Medicaid is associated with a higher probability that a child will receive an annual well-child visit.
- **Reduces Medicaid Costs.** Reducing movement in and out of Medicaid lowers average monthly per capita spending in Medicaid, increases utilization of preventive care, reduces the likelihood of inpatient hospital admissions and emergency room visits, and prevents disruption for enrollees, health plans, and providers.

Racial disparities and preventable deaths are the primary drivers for Wisconsin's high maternal mortality and morbidity rates, particularly among Black and American Indian women. As a leading evidence-based program with a proven track record at improving maternal and child health outcomes that empower families, NFP looks for opportunities to be part of the solution. To that end we support extending Medicaid coverage for postpartum women for an additional 90-day period and finding ways to increase the coverage period to 10-months postpartum.