

House Bill 661

By: Representative Parrish of the 158th

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT

1 To amend Code Section 49-4-159 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to
2 Medicaid coverage for lactation and postpartum care, so as to require the Department of
3 Community Health to allow mothers giving birth to retain Medicaid eligibility for one year
4 following such birth; to provide for a short title; to provide for legislative findings; to provide
5 for related matters; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

6 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

7 **SECTION 1.**

8 This Act shall be known and may be cited as the "Expanding Medicaid to Improve Health
9 Outcomes for New Mothers Act."

10 **SECTION 2.**

11 The General Assembly finds:

12 (1) The maternal mortality rate in the United States is the highest in the developed world
13 and continues to rise;

14 (2) Georgia ranks among the worst states in maternal mortality in the nation;

- 15 (3) Estimates show that almost half of all maternal mortalities in the United States are
16 preventable;
- 17 (4) Georgia's Maternal Mortality Review Committee found that 60 percent of maternal
18 deaths in this state in 2014 were preventable;
- 19 (5) According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, black mothers in the
20 United States die at three to four times the rate of white mothers, and black women are
21 twice as likely as white women to experience severe maternal morbidity;
- 22 (6) Socioeconomic status plays an important role in shaping access to health information
23 and health care services, including access to reproductive and maternal health care; and
24 the intersection of race, gender, and poverty further exacerbates inequities in health care
25 service and delivery;
- 26 (7) The lack of health insurance and regular access to health care directly impacts timely
27 diagnosis and treatment of medical conditions and is at the root of disproportionately
28 negative health outcomes;
- 29 (8) Access to safe and respectful health care is a human right and is essential to
30 improving maternal health and saving lives;
- 31 (9) Medicaid provides coverage for more than half of births in Georgia;
- 32 (10) More than half of maternal deaths in Georgia occur between 43 and 364 days
33 postpartum, and the Georgia Maternal Mortality Review Committee recommends that
34 Medicaid coverage extend into the months after delivery to treat and manage high-risk
35 comorbidities; and
- 36 (11) Medicaid coverage for postpartum mothers lapses at six months while related
37 maternal deaths may occur up to one year postpartum.

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SECTION 3.

39 Code Section 49-4-159 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to Medicaid
40 coverage for lactation and postpartum care, is amended as follows:

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41 "49-4-159.

42 (a) The department shall provide Medicaid coverage for:

43 (1) Lactation care and services, as defined in paragraph (5) of Code Section 43-22A-3,
44 to pregnant and lactating women and to children who are breastfeeding or receiving their
45 mother's milk; and

46 (2) Postpartum care for mothers for a period of ~~six months~~ one year following the date
47 the woman gives birth.

48 (b) If necessary to implement the provisions of this Code section, the department shall
49 submit a Medicaid state plan amendment or waiver request to the United States Department
50 of Health and Human Services."

51 **SECTION 4.**

52 All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.