

House Bill 693

By: Representatives Shannon of the 84<sup>th</sup>, Thomas of the 56<sup>th</sup>, Hugley of the 136<sup>th</sup>, Stephenson of the 90<sup>th</sup>, Cannon of the 58<sup>th</sup>, and others

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED  
AN ACT

1 To amend Title 49 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to social services, so  
2 as to require the Department of Community Health to allow mothers giving birth to newborns  
3 to retain Medicaid eligibility for one year following such birth; to provide for amendments  
4 to the state plan if necessary; to provide for a short title; to provide for legislative findings;  
5 to provide 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) Medicaid coverage for women who are eligible only during pregnancy lapses at 60  
33 days post-partum while related maternal deaths may occur up to one year post-partum;  
34 and

35 (11) More than half of maternal deaths in Georgia occur between 43 and 364 days  
36 post-partum, and the Georgia Maternal Mortality Review Committee recommends in its  
37 latest annual report to "extend insurance coverage into the months after delivery to treat  
38 and manage high-risk co-morbidities."

39 **SECTION 3.**

40 Title 49 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to social services, is amended  
41 in Article 7 of Chapter 4, relating to medical assistance generally, by adding a new Code  
42 section to read as follows:

43 "49-4-159.

44 (a) The department shall allow women giving birth to newborns to retain Medicaid  
45 eligibility for one year following such birth.

46 (b) The department shall submit any necessary modifications, if applicable, to the state  
47 plan for medical assistance filed pursuant to Code Section 49-4-142 in order to fulfill the  
48 requirements of this Code section."

49 **SECTION 4.**

50 All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.