

1 HB468
2 206671-1
3 By Representative Hall
4 RFD: Ways and Means General Fund
5 First Read: 25-FEB-21

SYNOPSIS: Under federal law, a pregnant woman who is eligible for medical assistance under Medicaid must be provided medical assistance for a period of 60 days after giving birth.

This bill would extend the period during which a pregnant woman who is eligible to receive medical assistance under Medicaid may continue to receive Medicaid assistance from 60 days to one year after giving birth.

A BILL
TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT

Relating to Medicaid; to extend the postpartum coverage period for pregnant women eligible for Medicaid assistance.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA:

Section 1. The Legislature finds all of the following:

1 (1) The question of how to provide comprehensive,
2 quality health care to all Alabamians regardless of income,
3 health status, age, or gender has been one the Alabama
4 Legislature has asked itself time and time again.

5 (2) New mothers in Alabama are suffering because of
6 their lack of access to postpartum health care.

7 (3) With current classification of COVID-19 as a
8 pandemic by the World Health Organization, a COVID-19 outbreak
9 in the state of Alabama could be devastating to the state's
10 economy and the health of our citizens.

11 (4) The United States government declared the novel
12 coronavirus a public health emergency on February 4, 2020.

13 (5) Failing to expand Medicaid ensures that many
14 Alabamians that may become infected will go undiagnosed and
15 untreated: people for whom going to the doctor would result in
16 financial calamity tend not to do so before their health
17 circumstances become dire.

18 (6) Pregnancy-related death rates have been dropping
19 worldwide, while they have more than doubled in the United
20 States in the past 30 years, rising from 7 deaths per 100,000
21 live births in 1987, to 17 in 2016, according to the Centers
22 for Disease Control and Prevention.

23 (7) Alabama women die from pregnancy and childbirth
24 complications at more than double the rate of women
25 nationally, according to new numbers from the National Center
26 for Health Statistics at the Centers for Disease Control and
27 Prevention.

1 (8) Alabama now ranks third highest in the nation in
2 maternal death rates behind Arkansas and Kentucky, with
3 Alabama's most current recorded rate at 36.4 maternal deaths
4 per 100,000 live births compared to the national rate of 17.4.

5 (9) With the expansion of Medicaid, around 397,000
6 uninsured Alabamians would be eligible to receive low-cost
7 health insurance, with a majority of these residents being
8 employed. Covering low-income adults would also reduce the
9 burden of medical debt, now the leading cause of personal
10 bankruptcy.

11 (10) Expansion of Medicaid will result in reduced
12 state spending on health care related services to those
13 previously uninsured residents with incomes below 133 percent
14 of the federal poverty level.

15 (11) In addition to enhancing access to health care,
16 expansion of Medicaid would promote revenue and economic
17 activity in this state, resulting in the preservation and
18 creation of jobs.

19 Section 2. (a) The Alabama Medicaid Agency shall
20 continue to provide medical assistance to a woman who is
21 eligible for medical assistance for pregnant women for a
22 period of not less than 12 months following the date the woman
23 delivers or experiences an involuntary miscarriage.

24 (b) If before implementing this section, the Alabama
25 Medicaid Agency determines a waiver or authorization from a
26 federal agency is necessary for implementation of this
27 section, the agency shall request the waiver or authorization

1 and may delay implementing this section until the waiver or
2 authorization is granted.

3 Section 3. This act shall become effective on the
4 first day of the third month following its passage and
5 approval by the Governor, or its otherwise becoming law.