



SCHOLARS
STRATEGY NETWORK

We Must Extend Postpartum Medicaid Coverage

Linda Franck, University of California, San Francisco

Renee Mehra, University of California-San Francisco

Monica R. McLemore, University of California, San Francisco

Medicaid, the publicly funded insurance program for low-income and disabled individuals covers 43.1 percent of all births in the U.S. Unfortunately, vital pregnancy-related coverage ends just 60 days after giving birth for most people on Medicaid. Black and Latinx women, as well as other birthing people of color, make up a disproportionate share of Medicaid enrollees. Research has shown that closing gaps in coverage could improve lactation and human milk feeding support, assist with family transitions and the physical and emotional recovery of birthing people.

Lack of insurance and transitions between plans disrupts trusted relationships between patients and providers who work together to address conditions such as diabetes, high blood pressure and other chronic conditions before a person becomes pregnant or during early prenatal care. Extending Medicaid coverage to 12 months would likely prevent many of the roughly 12 percent of pregnancy-related deaths occurring after six weeks postpartum.