We Must Extend Postpartum Medicaid Coverage

We have been particularly impressed with the Momnibus, an omnibus legislation that was recently introduced in the House of Representatives. The Momnibus includes provisions that will extend and enhance postpartum Medicaid coverage.

Unfortunately, this optional expansion would not be universally applied, and many women will remain uninsured during the postpartum period. It is essential to extend postpartum coverage to all women, regardless of their insurance status, to ensure access to quality care and prevent maternal health crises.

The lack of extended postpartum Medicaid coverage disproportionately affects women of color, who are more likely to experience pregnancy-related complications and have higher rates of postpartum depression. They also face more barriers to accessing care, such as limited access to affordable childcare and transportation, which can prevent them from seeking the care they need.

One additional consideration is the missed opportunities of the pandemic to improve maternal health care. With the increasing number of women giving birth during the pandemic, the need for postpartum care has never been more urgent.

The Momnibus would help to build on the ongoing effort to promote health, and the U.S. is one step closer to making this a reality. Despite the obvious shortcomings of these policies, including the lack of paid family leave and the high cost of healthcare, the Momnibus represents a significant step forward in addressing maternal health care.

We applaud the organizations that have worked to support both the passage of the Momnibus and extension of Medicaid during the postpartum period. This is a floor and not the ceiling. Expanded health care coverage must go hand-in-hand with access to quality care, redress of systemic barriers to health and wellness during the postpartum period. With no federal policies in place, the states will continue to work towards this goal.

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