

**An Act relative to expanding equitable access to maternal postpartum care  
S.2583**

**Lead Sponsor:** Sen. Joan Lovely

*The House companion bill, H.1297, sponsored by Rep. Liz Miranda, was attached to S.799 and amended as S.2583 with the favorable report to the Senate Committee on Ways and Means.*

**Background**

Maternal mortality and morbidity are growing health crises in the United States, especially for Black, Indigenous and People of Color. However, people eligible for MassHealth partially based on pregnancy lose this coverage just 60 days postpartum, limiting access to key services, such as care and support for pregnancy-related complications, chronic disease, and behavioral health. Extending coverage to 12 months postpartum will help ensure continuous coverage during a critical time, impacting the long-term health and wellbeing of pregnant and birthing individuals, their families and their communities.

**Why is this legislation important?**

- Massachusetts has expanded MassHealth to more low-income residents, including pregnant and birthing individuals. Yet, some postpartum individuals experience disruptions in coverage and care under current eligibility rules, leading to delays in identifying and treating pressing health challenges.
- For every person who dies from pregnancy-related causes, another 70 suffer from severe physical illness or disability, including behavioral health conditions.
- In Massachusetts, [MassHealth covers 35% of births](#). Medicaid-enrolled pregnant women are more likely than women with private coverage to have certain chronic conditions, preterm births or low birthweight babies, putting them at higher risk for poor maternal outcomes.
- [Pregnancy-associated mortality](#) increased 33% in Massachusetts between 2012 and 2014, the latest time period for which publicly available data is available.

**Why is this a health equity issue?**

- Individuals of color are more likely than white individuals to die or experience serious illness and injury due to pregnancy-related causes.
- Black birthing individuals have pregnancy-related mortality rates that are over [three times higher](#) than the rate for white birthing individuals.
- Black, Indigenous and People of Color make up a disproportionate share of Medicaid enrollees – [52.6%](#) of MassHealth members.

**What does this legislation do?**

This legislation requires MassHealth to continue coverage for 12 months postpartum, making this policy permanent in state law, consistent with current federal and state efforts.

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