



March 16th, 2023

Dear Chair Harless, Vice Chair Howard and committee members,

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 12, an incredibly important bill to expand Medicaid for Pregnant Women to twelve months after a Texas mom gives birth. We are deeply grateful to Representative Rose for her hard work on this legislation and extend our thanks to the Speaker for championing 12 months of coverage as a priority this session.

Every Body Texas is a non-profit organization dedicated to ensuring that every person in Texas can access safe, unbiased, high-quality sexual and reproductive healthcare. As the statewide Title X Family Planning Program grantee for Texas, Every Body Texas funds a diverse network of over 30 agencies—including federally qualified health centers (FQHCs), public health departments, hospital-based clinics, and free-standing family planning clinics—that serve nearly 200,000 clients at more than 150 service sites throughout Texas.

The first year of a child's life is critically important for a healthy start. It's also important for mom's recovery from birth and the health of the whole family. Medicaid for Pregnant Women gives full healthcare coverage to low-income women during their pregnancies but ends just 60 days after they give birth. One out of every four Texas women of childbearing age are uninsured. A full year of healthcare coverage after giving birth means Texas moms have access to comprehensive healthcare. During the 12 months after giving birth—a critical period for the health of new moms—this coverage would allow them to see a doctor for any illness, access contraception, and get preventive health services to help them stay healthy.

Twelve months of coverage is the number one recommendation of the Maternal Mortality and Morbidity Review Committee to prevent maternal deaths, ninety percent of which are preventable.¹ As our colleagues at Texans Care for Children have noted in their testimony on this important legislation, the burden of maternal mortality weighs heaviest on Black women, who are more than twice as likely to die of pregnancy-related causes than the average for all women, regardless of education level or other socioeconomic factors. A full year of coverage after pregnancy would prevent maternal morbidities and mortalities by allowing more Texas mothers to see a medical or mental health professional to manage medical issues and complications before they get worse — such as postpartum depression, cardiac event, infection, and extreme blood loss or hemorrhage.

¹ Texas Maternal Mortality and Morbidity Committee and Department of Stat Health Services Joint Biennial Report 2022. <https://www.dshs.texas.gov/sites/default/files/legislative/2022-Reports/Joint-Biennial-MMMRC-Report-2022.pdf>



We look forward to joining the growing majority of US states, including Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, in passing this life saving legislation for Texas families. Please do not hesitate to reach out to us with any additional question on this matter.

Sincerely,

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