

### Where We Stand:

NAMI believes that all people with mental health conditions deserve accessible, affordable, and comprehensive health care. NAMI supports public policies and laws that extend Medicaid coverage for at least 12 months postpartum.

### Why We Care:

Mental health conditions are common among many women during pregnancy or the postpartum period (after the birth of a child). Postpartum depression and anxiety disorders affect [one in seven](#) mothers nationwide, making it the [most common](#) complication of pregnancy and childbirth. Yet, national figures show that these conditions often go undiagnosed and untreated: only [50%](#) of women diagnosed with perinatal depression receive treatment. Unfortunately, when left untreated, mental health conditions are one of the [leading causes](#) of pregnancy-related death that occur within a year postpartum.

Medicaid is the primary payer of maternity care in the U.S., covering [nearly half](#) of all births. Therefore, Medicaid coverage is a critically important way to address maternal mental health and our nation's rising rate of maternal mortality.

The days and weeks following birth are a vital period for a woman and her infant, setting the stage for long-term health and well-being. However, state Medicaid programs are only required to cover women 60 days after giving birth. Once the 60-day period ends, some women can successfully transition to other sources of insurance, but many are left uninsured.

These gaps in coverage are especially problematic for individuals with serious and chronic health conditions, like mental illness,

limiting their access to critical health services and supports. When new mothers lack consistent coverage for care, their mental and physical health suffers, and they are [less likely](#) to receive outpatient mental health services.

Additionally, these coverage disruptions [disproportionately](#) affect women of color; nearly half of non-Hispanic Black women and 80% of Hispanic women lack continuous insurance coverage from pre-pregnancy to postpartum.

### NAMI supports public policies and laws that extend Medicaid coverage for at least 12 months postpartum

Access to coverage and care is essential for people with mental illness to successfully manage their condition, including pregnant and postpartum women. The American Rescue Plan Act (P.L. 117-2) included a new five-year option that allows states to extend the postpartum period to 12 months. NAMI supports states taking advantage of this, and for the option to be made permanent so that more women have access to mental health care during the critical postpartum period.

To learn more about NAMI's work on this issue, visit [www.nami.org/Advocacy/Policy-Priorities](http://www.nami.org/Advocacy/Policy-Priorities)