

Create a Special Enrollment Period in the ACA Marketplaces for Pregnancy Cosponsor the *Healthy MOM Act* (S. 2220)

Through passage of the Affordable Care Act (ACA), we have made historic progress toward ending discrimination against women in health insurance coverage. However, more work must be done to ensure women's access to timely, comprehensive maternity care.

Access to quality prenatal and maternity care is essential for the well-being of both women and infants. Timely maternity care improves the health of pregnant individuals, birth outcomes, and the health of babies throughout their lifetimes. In fact, maternal mortality rates are three to four times higher for women who do not receive prenatal care compared to those who do, and babies of mothers who do not receive prenatal care are five times more likely to die and three times as likely to be born prematurely compared to mothers who receive adequate care.

The *Healthy MOM Act* (S. 2220) would help protect the health of women and newborns by ensuring that all women eligible for coverage through the ACA insurance marketplaces, as well as women eligible for other individual or group health plan coverage, can access affordable health coverage during their pregnancy.

Specifically, the *Healthy MOM Act* would:

- Create a special enrollment period (SEP) in the ACA marketplaces for pregnant individuals so that they can enroll in or change their healthcare plan;
- Enable the Director of the Office of Personnel Management to establish an SEP for pregnancy for those eligible to receive coverage, but who do not currently receive coverage, through the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program;
- Ensure comprehensive coverage of maternity care – including labor and delivery – for dependent children covered by group health plans and other forms of employer-sponsored coverage; and
- Protect existing income eligibility levels for pregnant women and infants covered by Medicaid.

Earlier this year, the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) informed Congress that HHS lacks the legal authority to establish a pregnancy SEP for women to sign up for insurance on the ACA's Exchanges. Congress should act to address this problem by providing a common-sense SEP for women whose coverage needs can change suddenly due to pregnancy.

For more information or to be added as a co-sponsor to S. 2220, please contact Abigail Duggan in Senator Brown's office at Abigail_Duggan@brown.senate.gov or (202) 224-2315