

# Support HB 133 by Representative Toni Rose

Promote Health for Texas Mothers and Babies During the Critical First Year of a Child's Life

May 5, 2021

Childbirth, one of life's greatest joys, can turn into tragedy when medical issues or pregnancy complications arise. Maternal mortality is just the tip of the iceberg. Many more Texas moms face medical issues and complications in the year following pregnancy — such as postpartum depression, cardiac arrest, infection, and extreme blood loss or hemorrhage. These issues often lead to extra hospital stays, long-term health problems for mother and baby, and higher costs to Medicaid and the state.

Texas women with low incomes can get Medicaid coverage while they are pregnant, but it cuts off 60 days after pregnancy, leaving new moms uninsured at a pivotal time for their health and their baby's healthy development. This is especially worrisome because one-third of maternal deaths in Texas occur between 43 days and one year after pregnancy. When a new mom becomes uninsured, she can obtain some limited health services from the state's Healthy Texas Women-Plus program, or from safety-net clinics if she has one nearby, but those options have significant limitations. Too often, women must rely on hospital emergency rooms for care that could have been prevented or treated better, earlier, and more cost-efficiently by a doctor or clinic.

**HB 133 would allow mothers to keep Medicaid insurance for one year after pregnancy instead of just two months.** This step is the top recommendation of Texas' Maternal Mortality & Morbidity Review Committee. In contrast to the limited options when women become uninsured, this bill allows new moms to access needed medications, get consistent health care, and continue seeing their doctor, specialist, or other professional without disruption. HB 133 would offer comprehensive care for new moms, leverage Texas' existing provider network, and allow the state to draw down federal funds. **This bill passed the House with strong bipartisan support.**

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