

## Case Managers Provide Key Support to Moms with High-Risk Pregnancies

**Instead of Cutting off Support at Childbirth, the Legislature Should Allow Case Managers to Continue Supporting New Moms During the Year after Pregnancy**

### **Texas Has an Effective “Case Management” Program for Women with High-Risk Pregnancies**

Case Management for Children and Pregnant Women (CPW) is a Medicaid benefit that provides health-related case management services to women with high-risk pregnancies as well as children from birth through age 20 with a health condition.<sup>1</sup> Participating women are paired with a case manager who helps them access needed medical, social, educational, and other services related to their health condition. That can include help finding a mental health therapist in their local area, finding housing, or navigating options for healthy food access, like SNAP or WIC. Research suggests that effective case management may improve patient adherence to treatment, increase patient satisfaction, and reduce health care use and costs.<sup>2</sup>

**Last session, led by Sen. Lois Kolkhorst and Rep. Lacy Hull, the Legislature recognized the importance of the program by allowing doulas and community health workers to serve as case managers for pregnant women (HB 1575).** Registered nurses and social workers may also serve as case managers.

### **Unfortunately, the CPW Program is Not Available to Moms During the Critical Months After Pregnancy**

Currently, the program only serves women during their pregnancy, despite the importance of the first months after a pregnancy.

### **The Legislature Has Recognized the Importance of Supporting Mothers’ Health During the First Year After Childbirth**

The first year after childbirth is a critical time for a mother’s health — which has a significant impact on her baby’s health and development. Many new moms experience postpartum depression, urinary incontinence, exhaustion, depression, and other health issues during this time.<sup>3</sup> Children of mothers with untreated maternal mental health conditions have higher rates of low birth weight or preterm birth and are more likely to have behavioral and developmental disorders.<sup>4</sup>



In the most tragic cases, these postpartum health challenges prove fatal.

The Texas Maternal Mortality & Morbidity Review Committee found that 25 percent of maternal deaths in Texas occur between 43 days and one year after pregnancy. They also reported that the vast majority (about 80 percent) of maternal deaths are preventable.<sup>5</sup> To ensure new moms have a positive postpartum experience, they need to receive consistent information and support.<sup>6</sup> **Recognizing the importance of postpartum health for Texas mothers, in 2023 the Legislature extended postpartum Medicaid coverage to a full year after pregnancy.**

### **Building on Last Session’s Progress, the Legislature Should Allow Moms to Use the Case Management Program During the Year After Pregnancy**

This step would sync up the Legislature’s work from last session on the case management program and postpartum health coverage so more moms get the support they need.

# Endnotes

1. Texas Health Steps *Case Management for Children and Pregnant Women* <https://www.txhealthsteps.com/case-management-services>
2. Buja, A., Francesconi, P., Bellini, I., Barletta, V., Girardi, G., Braga, M., Cosentino, M., Marvulli, M., Baldo, V., & Damiani, G. (2020). Health and health service usage outcomes of case management for patients with long-term conditions: A review of reviews. *Primary Health Care Research & Development*, 21, e26. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1463423620000080>.
3. Gmelig Meyling, M. M., Frieling, M. E., Vervoort, J. P. M., Feijen-de Jong, E. I., Jansen, D. E. M. C. (2023). Health problems experienced by women during the first year postpartum: A systematic review. *European Journal of Midwifery*, 7(December), 1-20. <https://doi.org/10.18332/ejm/173417>
4. Margiotta, C., Gao, J., O'Neil, S., Vohra, D., & Zivin, K. (2022). The economic impact of untreated maternal mental health conditions in Texas. *BMC pregnancy and childbirth*, 22(1), 700. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12884-022-05001-6>
5. Maternal Mortality and Morbidity Task Force and Department of State Health Services Joint Biennial Report. (2024). Available at <https://www.dshs.texas.gov/sites/default/files/legislative/2024-Reports/MMMRC-DSHS-Joint-Biennial-Report-2024.pdf>.
6. Sendas, M. V., & Freitas, M. J. (2024). The needs of women in the postpartum period: A scoping review. *Midwifery*, 136, 104098. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.midw.2024.104098>