



April 14, 2021

Liz Richter
Acting Administrator
Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services
Box 8016, Baltimore, MD 21244-8016

Dear Acting Administrator Richter:

On behalf of the Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine (SMFM), which represents more than 5,000 physicians and scientists dedicated to optimizing the health of high-risk pregnant people and their families, we write to thank you for your commitment to the health of the American people. We are especially grateful that the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) approved Illinois' request to extend postpartum Medicaid coverage for a full year.

Established in 1977, SMFM is the medical professional society for obstetricians who have additional training in the area of high-risk pregnancies. Our members see the sickest patients with the most complicated pregnancies. As such, SMFM was pleased to see President Biden sign the American Rescue Plan Act into law, securing critical COVID-19 relief for individuals, families, and communities across the country. The new law also gives states the option to extend Medicaid coverage from 60 days to one year postpartum. SMFM has long advocated for extending Medicaid coverage as an essential first step in reducing maternal mortality, addressing disparities, and improving the health of families, especially considering that one third of pregnancy-related deaths occur between one week and one year postpartum.

As you work to implement the new law, we urge the CMS to issue timely and comprehensive guidance for states so that more may take advantage of the new state level flexibility to extend Medicaid. Additionally, we recommend that you continue to approve pending Section 1115 demonstration waivers to extend postpartum Medicaid coverage. Our recommendations are consistent with those submitted by American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists on March 18, 2021.

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Medicaid is the largest single payer for childbirth services in the U.S., funding 43% of deliveries overall, and more than 65% of the births to women of color (2016). Swift implementation of Medicaid extension has the potential to impact millions of pregnant people and their families each year. We appreciate your attention to this important issue. Should you have any questions, please contact Kerri Wade at kwade@smfm.org.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'W. Grobman', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

William Grobman, MD, MBA
President

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Wurster', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Christina J. Wurster, MBA, CAE
Chief Executive Officer

