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# A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO HEALTH.

**BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:**

1           SECTION 1. The legislature finds that women who are  
2 ineligible for postpartum health coverage struggle to get  
3 necessary care during the fourth trimester, the twelve weeks  
4 following childbirth. The legislature notes that these twelve  
5 weeks are a critical time as women are more likely to die of  
6 pregnancy-related conditions during this time than during  
7 pregnancy or childbirth. Nationwide, drug overdoses, suicides,  
8 and pregnancy-related chronic illnesses, including diabetes,  
9 heart disease, and high blood pressure, contribute to a rise in  
10 deaths among women during pregnancy, childbirth, and the first  
11 twelve months after childbirth.

12           The legislature also finds that according to the United  
13 States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, adequate  
14 medical attention could prevent three out of five  
15 pregnancy-related deaths. Further, medicaid pregnancy coverage,  
16 which pays for nearly half of all births in the United States,  
17 expires sixty days after childbirth, leaving many women without



1 health insurance during this vulnerable time. Although women  
2 may reapply as a parent after this sixty-day time period,  
3 because the income limit for parents is lower, many women are  
4 unable to qualify for coverage as a parent. However,  
5 policymakers in at least six states, including California,  
6 Illinois, Missouri, New Jersey, South Carolina, and Tennessee,  
7 are working to extend medicaid coverage to a full year after  
8 childbirth. Additionally, health agencies in Georgia, Texas,  
9 Utah, and Washington recommend similar efforts.

10 The legislature acknowledges that, according to the  
11 Commonwealth Fund, a health care advocacy group, maternal  
12 mortality rates, including deaths during and up to one year  
13 after pregnancy, are higher in the United States than in other  
14 developed nations. Additionally, while pregnancy-related death  
15 rates have dropped worldwide over the past thirty years, these  
16 rates have more than doubled in the United States. According to  
17 the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention,  
18 the number of deaths per one hundred thousand live births in the  
19 United States has risen from approximately seven in 1987 to  
20 nearly seventeen in 2016.



1           Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to provide twelve  
2 months of postpartum medical assistance to pregnant women who  
3 are ineligible for medical insurance coverage through their  
4 employer or medicaid.

5           SECTION 2. Section 346-70, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is  
6 amended to read as follows:

7           " [†] §346-70 [†] **Medical assistance for other pregnant**  
8 **women.** (a) The department may provide state-funded medical  
9 assistance to a pregnant woman age nineteen years of age or  
10 older whose countable family income does not exceed one hundred  
11 and eighty-five per cent of the federal poverty level for a  
12 family of applicable size, including the expected unborn  
13 children. The pregnant woman shall be:

14           (1) A legal immigrant who entered the United States on or  
15 after August 22, 1996; and

16           (2) Otherwise eligible for benefits under the State's  
17 medicaid program but is prohibited from participating  
18 in any medical assistance program under title XIX of  
19 the Social Security Act for a period of five years  
20 beginning on the date of her entry into the United  
21 States, due to restricted eligibility rules imposed by



1 title XIX of the Social Security Act and the Personal  
2 Responsibility and Work ~~[+]~~Opportunity~~[+]~~  
3 Reconciliation Act of 1996.

4 (b) Once determined eligible for medical assistance under  
5 this section, the pregnant woman shall continue to be eligible  
6 throughout her pregnancy and through the last day of the  
7 calendar month in which the sixty-day period following  
8 childbirth ends.

9 (c) Any pregnant woman who is ineligible for medical  
10 insurance coverage through her employer or medicaid shall be  
11 eligible for medical assistance under this section for a period  
12 ending twelve months following childbirth.

13 ~~[-e-]~~ (d) Assets shall not be evaluated for eligibility  
14 purposes.

15 ~~[-d-]~~ (e) The director shall adopt rules pursuant to  
16 chapter 91 to determine eligibility for medical assistance."

17 SECTION 3. Statutory material to be repealed is bracketed  
18 and stricken. New statutory material is underscored.

19 SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2050.



**Report Title:**

Department of Human Services; Pregnancy; Medical Assistance

**Description:**

Provides 12 months of postpartum medical assistance to pregnant women who are ineligible for medical insurance coverage through their employer or medicaid. Takes effect on 7/1/2050. (HD1)

*The summary description of legislation appearing on this page is for informational purposes only and is not legislation or evidence of legislative intent.*

