

ACT 2

H.B. NO. 2761

A Bill for an Act Relating to Women's Health.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Hawaii:

SECTION 1. The legislature finds that improving the health of women in the state can improve the quality of health for families and the community. Nationwide, more than 20,000,000 low-income women receive health coverage and long-term care through medicaid, the nation's public health insurance program for the low-income population. Although medicaid is not typically considered a women's health program, 69 per cent of its adult beneficiaries are women. Medicaid provides a wide range of health services for women including primary care, pregnancy care, reproductive health care, care for chronic conditions and disabilities, assistance with medicare costs, and long-term care. In general, compared to the total population, women participants in the medicaid program tend to be poor, minorities, and mothers. In Hawaii, the medicaid program is implemented through the Hawaii QUEST program.

According to data on 52,932 women in Hawaii who gave birth to children from 2004 to 2006, women enrolled in the Hawaii QUEST health insurance program were, compared with other women who have recently given birth but were covered under other health insurance:

- (1) Three times less likely to access prenatal care in the first trimester of pregnancy;
- (2) Just as likely to have their infants receive their first well-baby check, but twice as likely not to have received the recommended post-partum check for new mothers;
- (3) One-and-a-half times more likely to have an unintended pregnancy;
- (4) At three to four times and two to three times higher risk of being abused before becoming pregnant by their former and current spouses, respectively;
- (5) At three to four times higher risk of experiencing intimate partner violence while pregnant;
- (6) One-and-a-half times more likely to require dental services during pregnancy;
- (7) Three times more likely to smoke during the last three months of pregnancy;
- (8) Three to four times more likely to use illicit drugs during pregnancy;

- (9) Twice as likely to experience post-partum depression;
- (10) Twice as likely not to have initiated breastfeeding; and
- (11) Ten per cent more likely to have a low birthweight or premature infant.

The legislature also finds that pregnancies that recur within a short period of time place great stress on mothers and their infants. Interconception care, or the full scope of preventive and primary care services for women between pregnancies, provides additional intensive interventions to women who have had a previous pregnancy that ended in an adverse outcome, which is an important predictor of future reproductive risk.

The purpose of this Act is to require the department of human services to apply to the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services to extend post-partum and interconception care from eight weeks to at least six months for women who participate in the Hawaii QUEST program.

SECTION 2. (a) The department of human services shall apply to the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services to amend the state medicaid plan to extend post-partum and interconception care from eight weeks to a minimum of six months for women who participate in the Hawaii QUEST program, to allow the state to receive federal reimbursement. For the purpose of this section, the term “interconception care” means the full scope of preventive and primary care services for women between pregnancies.

(b) The department of human services shall report to the legislature upon receiving a response from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services on the requested amendment to the state medicaid plan.

SECTION 3. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

(Vetoed by Governor and veto overridden by Legislature on July 8, 2008.)