

NC Medicaid's New Extended Postpartum Coverage

NC Medicaid

What providers need to know about the extension of postpartum coverage for NC Medicaid beneficiaries

To help improve maternal health and coverage stability, a provision in the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA) gave states the option to extend Medicaid postpartum care from 60 days to 12 months. The extended coverage was included in North Carolina's biennial budget approved by the NC General Assembly and signed into law by Governor Cooper in November 2021.

Effective April 1, 2022, the new benefit will provide 12 months of continuous postpartum coverage to eligible NC Medicaid beneficiaries who are pregnant or gave birth between Feb. 1, 2022, and March 31, 2022.

In addition to the extended coverage period, pregnant and postpartum beneficiaries have access to full Medicaid benefits, instead of the maternity-focused benefits previously included in the Medicaid for Pregnant Women (MPW) program. The extended coverage is currently authorized through March 2027.

To receive the expanded postpartum benefit, the beneficiary's caseworker at their local Department of Social Services (DSS) must be notified when the beneficiary becomes pregnant **and** when the pregnancy ends. This must be done no matter which Medicaid program/category the beneficiary receives.

Eligible beneficiaries will automatically receive the extended postpartum coverage, if enrolled in MPW or in their 60 days postpartum period **on** or after April 1, 2022. A letter will be sent to them letting them know of the change.

WHAT HAS CHANGED WITH COVERAGE?

- Eligible beneficiaries will receive 12 months of continuous postpartum coverage beginning the date their pregnancy ends. Coverage will end on the last day of the last month of their 12-month postpartum period.
- Eligible beneficiaries, including MPW, will receive full Medicaid benefits.

ELIGIBILITY PERIOD

After April 1, 2022, postpartum coverage for NC Medicaid enrolled pregnant beneficiaries will extend for 12 months from the pregnancy end date.

Beneficiaries are entitled to continuous eligibility through the last day of the last month in which the 12-month postpartum period ends.

For example, if a beneficiary gives birth on May 5, 2022, their coverage would begin on that day and would be effective through May 31, 2023.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR POSTPARTUM COVERAGE?

Beneficiaries are eligible if they are pregnant or in the 60-day postpartum period on or after April 1, 2022.

Beneficiaries will remain eligible regardless of changes in circumstances that may affect eligibility, such as a change in income, family unit or categorical eligibility (e.g., reaching an age milestone) with the exception of death, moving out of state or if a person requests to leave the Medicaid program.

A renewal must be completed at the end of the 12-month postpartum period to evaluate NC Medicaid eligibility in another program after the postpartum period.

HOW CAN BENEFICIARIES ENROLL?

Individuals may apply for NC Medicaid online at epass.nc.gov, in person or by phone at their local [Department of Social Services \(DSS\) office](#), or by filling out a paper application and mailing, faxing or dropping it off at their local DSS office.

WHAT IF BENEFICIARIES HAVE QUESTIONS?

Beneficiaries can call the NC Medicaid Contact Center at 888-245-0179, Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

WHAT IF I HAVE QUESTIONS?

If providers have questions about a beneficiary's Medicaid eligibility, they should contact the NCTracks Call Center at 800-688-6696.

