

# **Gov. Pritzker Commends Advocates And Legislators For Passing Bill To Expand Maternal And Child Health Programs**

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SPRINGFIELD — Governor JB Pritzker joined advocates and legislative leaders to laud the passage of Senate Bill 967. The legislation ensures enactment of a Family Planning State Plan Amendment (SPA), which will expand the current Illinois Medicaid plan so that individuals who don't qualify for full benefit Medicaid still have coverage for preventive contraceptive care and associated screenings related to reproductive well-being.

“I commend and celebrate the advocates and our partners in the General Assembly for their work to pass Senate Bill 967, a bill that ensures Illinois continues to be a leader in our efforts to erode racial disparities in healthcare coverage and access for women and babies,” said Governor JB Pritzker. “Senate Bill 967 allows the state to expand its maternal and child health programs to serve pregnant and postpartum individuals determined high-risk.”

“Reports have shown that Black mothers and their babies are disproportionately impacted by postpartum mortality, which is why we must continue to find solutions to best address those disparities,” said State Senator Cristina Castro (D- Elgin). “I am continuously working with all stakeholders involved to make sure every mother in Illinois gets the postpartum care they need to raise happy, healthy children.”

“With Senate Bill 967, we are improving health care outcomes and leveraging disparities that exist for at-risk women following childbirth,” said House Majority Conference Chairperson Latoya Greenwood (D-East St. Louis). “We cannot afford to stand idly by while vulnerable and at-risk women, in particular Black and Latino mothers are counting on us to stand up for reasonable access to health care and other necessary protections.”

“We celebrate Senate Bill 967. The time to expand contraceptive coverage is now,” said ICAN! Executive Director Katie Thiede and Planned Parenthood of Illinois President & CEO Jennifer Welch. “Illinois’ profound racial disparities in maternal morbidity and mortality will not be adequately addressed until all people, especially Black, Indigenous, People of Color, are able to achieve reproductive well-being through access to high quality, patient-centered family planning services without financial barriers. The Family Planning SPA is a widely supported and fiscally responsible means through which to pursue reproductive justice in the state of Illinois.”

One in four reproductive-aged women in Illinois still have an unmet contraceptive need. Part of ensuring maternal health means ensuring people can adequately space their pregnancies, especially if they have any existing health conditions. It also means ensuring equitable access to comprehensive and patient-centered contraceptive care, especially for people of color and others who face additional risks in pregnancy as a result of systemic racism and inequitable distribution of resources. Specifically in Illinois, Black women are six times more likely to die of a pregnancy-related condition than white women. During the COVID-19 pandemic, these inequities have only been exacerbated.

Under this bill, the Family Planning SPA supports individuals’ rights to decide if and when to be pregnant while removing the burden of any financial barriers related to accessing all FDA contraceptive methods. It’s a fiscally prudent policy as the federal

government covers 90% of expenses for all family planning services while the state is only responsible for the remaining 10%.

In order to enact this important legislation, Gov. Pritzker issued an amendatory veto to correct a technical error in one section's effective date that conflicts with the implementation timeline. The Governor looks forward to working with the legislature to ensure both chambers concur and pledged to certify the bill once the amendatory veto passes the legislature. The full amendatory veto message is attached.