

Duckworth Discusses Importance Of RSV Vaccine Access, Improving Maternal Health Outcomes With Blue Shield Of Illinois

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WASHINGTON, D.C. — U.S. Senator Tammy Duckworth (D-IL) today met with Blue Cross Blue Shield of Illinois President Stephen Harris to discuss how the insurance

provider can ensure the drug to help prevent RSV in babies is available with no cost-sharing, as well as the Senator's priorities of reducing negative maternal health outcomes and health inequities, especially for Illinoisans of color and Illinoisans with disabilities, who too often experience barriers to care.

“It was good to meet with Blue Cross Blue Shield of Illinois and discuss how together, we can work toward a future where more Illinois families can easily access the healthcare they need, when and where they need it,” Duckworth said. “I’ll keep pushing to help make healthcare more accessible and equitable for communities across Illinois.”

Duckworth has long been a champion for public health, especially for children. She recently [urged](#) America's Health Insurance Plans members to fully cover nirsevimab, the drug to help prevent severe RSV disease in children. She has also continued to work to address the maternal health crisis and health equity in our country. Last month, she [joined](#) U.S. Representative Robin Kelly (D-IL-02) and U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) Administrator Carole Johnson on Chicago's south side for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' M.O.M.S (Maternal Outcomes Matter Showers) Tour, highlighting her work on this important issue and the need to do more to address our country's ongoing maternal mortality crisis.

Duckworth and Kelly, along with U.S. Senator Dick Durbin (D-IL), authored the [*Mothers and Offspring Mortality and Morbidity Awareness \(MOMMA's\) Act*](#), which seeks to improve maternal and infant health outcomes, especially for women and babies of color. One of the main provisions of this legislation is ensuring that new moms can remain on Medicaid health coverage for a full year after their pregnancy, versus just 60 days, a provision which was [included](#) in the American Rescue Plan thanks to their leadership. Last year this provision was [included](#) in the Fiscal Year 2023 Omnibus Appropriations bill, making permanent the option to allow states to continue to provide this coverage.

In 2021, Duckworth's *Protecting Moms Who Served Act* was [signed into law](#), helping address the maternal mortality crisis among women Veterans by helping improve care at VA facilities and shed light on the scope of this crisis, especially among woman of color. To build upon this law, earlier this year Duckworth [introduced](#) the *Maternal Health for Veterans Act*, legislation to strengthen oversight of the VA maternity care coordination while authorizing new funding to make sure the VA has what it needs to provide more women Veterans with access to the maternal care they've earned through their service.