

Medicaid postpartum coverage extension, postpartum optimization, and promoting birth equity

This communication applies to the Medicaid programs for Simply Healthcare Plans, Inc. (Simply) and Clear Health Alliance (CHA).

Medicaid postpartum coverage extension

Presently, almost half of all births in Florida are financed by Medicaid coverage (Swe rlick & Yager, 2021). In an effort to reduce maternal mortality and morbidity rates and improve health outcomes for new mothers and infants, The Florida House of Representatives (2021) passed the *HB 5201* healthcare bill that extends postpartum Medicaid eligibility and coverage from 60 days to 12 months post-delivery. Effective **July 1, 2021**, this 10-month extension will provide the time needed for mothers to access care, obtain effective contraception, and if indicated, coordinate any chronic disease management (including mental health). The maternal mortality rate for 2019 was 20.1 deaths per 100,000 live births (Hoyert, 2020).

Recent data shows that a relatively large portion of pregnancy-related deaths in the United States occurs after birth. Approximately, **52%** occur after the delivery, or during postpartum:

- **19%** of all maternal deaths occur between one and six days' postpartum
- **21%** of all maternal deaths are between one and six weeks' postpartum
- **12%** of all maternal deaths take place during the remaining portion of the year (Declercq & Zephyrin, 2020)

Postpartum optimization

The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) 2018 committee opinion on *Optimizing Postpartum Care* recommends that "postpartum care should become an ongoing process, rather than a single encounter, with services and support tailored to each woman's individual needs" (p. e141). Anticipatory guidance should start during pregnancy with the development of a postpartum care plan that addresses the transition to parenthood and well-woman care (ACOG, 2018, p. e140). ACOG's 2018 guidance suggests that all women should ideally have contact with a maternal care provider within the first three weeks' postpartum. This initial assessment should be followed up with ongoing care as needed, concluding with a comprehensive postpartum visit no later than 12 weeks after birth. The comprehensive postpartum visit should include a full assessment of physical, social, and psychological well-being and, if indicated, coordination of care for any chronic medical conditions (ACOG, 2018).

<https://provider.simplyhealthcareplans.com>

<https://provider.clearhealthalliance.com>

Simply Healthcare Plans, Inc. is a Managed Care Plan with a Florida Medicaid contract. Simply Healthcare Plans, Inc. dba Clear Health Alliance is a Managed Care Plan with a Florida Medicaid contract.

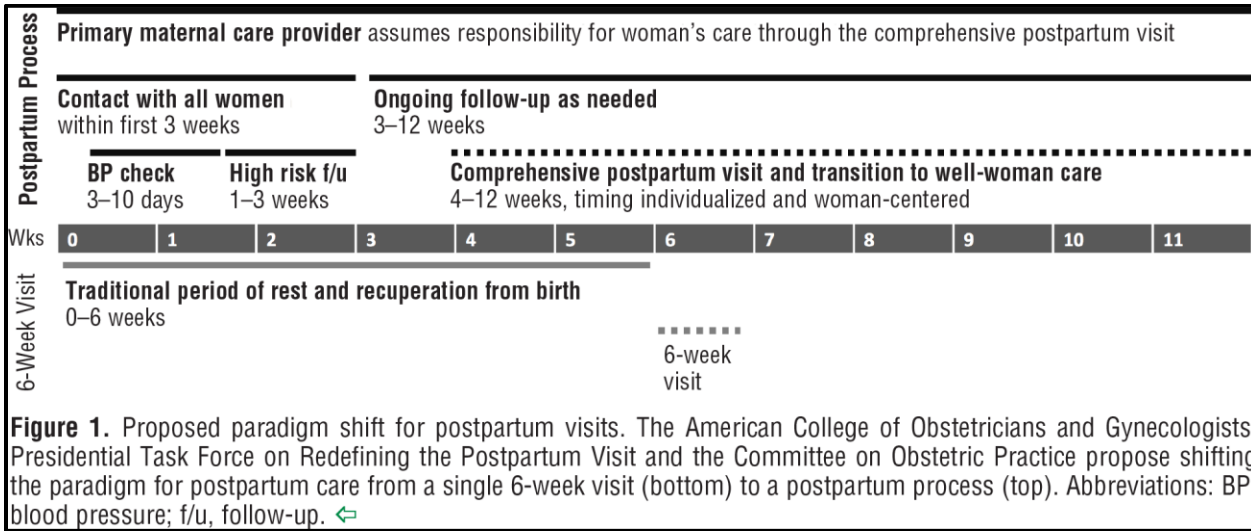
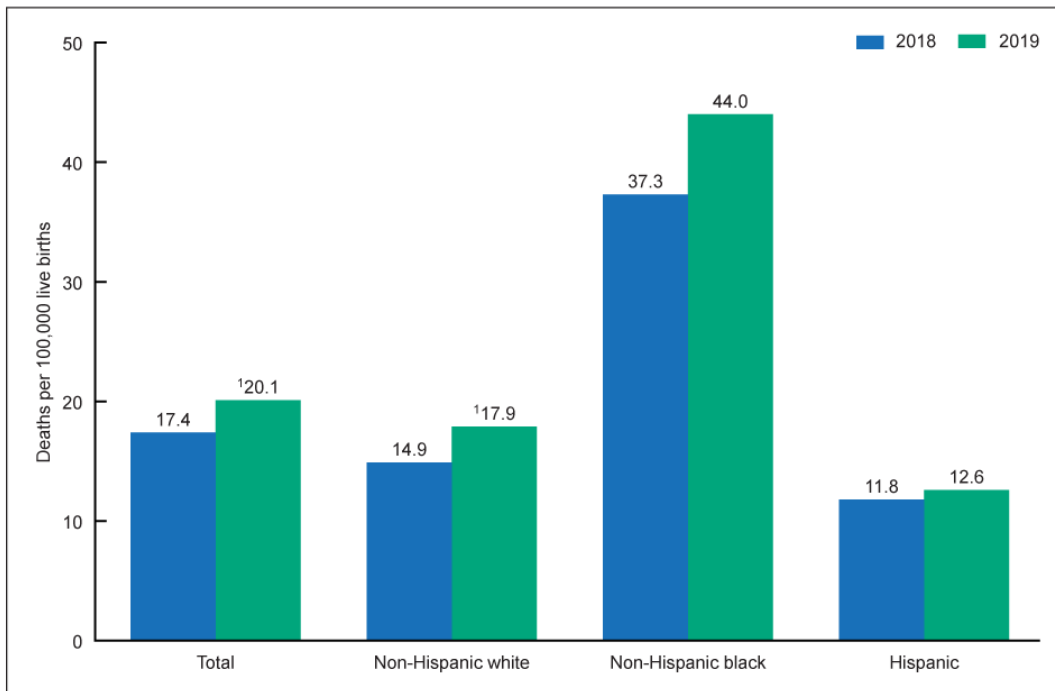


Figure 1. Proposed paradigm shift for postpartum visits. The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists' Presidential Task Force on Redefining the Postpartum Visit and the Committee on Obstetric Practice propose shifting the paradigm for postpartum care from a single 6-week visit (bottom) to a postpartum process (top). Abbreviations: BP, blood pressure; f/u, follow-up. ↩

(ACOG, 2018)

Promoting birth equity

Race is the most notable disparity in maternal mortality rates in America. Maternal mortality rates for non-Hispanic Black women were significantly higher than rates for non-Hispanic white and Hispanic women. Non-Hispanic Black women die at a rate that is 3 to 4 times more likely than their non-Hispanic white and Hispanic counterparts (Hoyert, 2020).



¹Statistically significant increase in rate from 2018 to 2019 ($p < 0.05$).
NOTE: Race groups are single race.
SOURCE: National Center for Health Statistics, National Vital Statistics System, Mortality.

(Hoyert, 2020)

Simply and CHA also offer an interactive learning experience on *Promoting Birth Equity*. This learning experience was developed to promote a culture of equity and disrupt any implicit and explicit bias so that all mothers and babies — regardless of their race, ethnicity, culture, language, gender identity, sexual orientation, and/or socioeconomic status — have access to every opportunity for optimal maternal and birth outcomes. This online learning can be found on the My Diverse Patient website: mydiversepatients.com/le/mhd/index.

To combat the many social determinants of health (SDoH) our members encounter, Simply and CHA have developed a community resource link that will help providers and members find locally available resources.

Simply and CHA member and provider community resource link: clearhealthalliance.auntbertha.com

To learn more about extended Medicaid postpartum coverage, postpartum care optimization, and/or methods to promote birth equity and address SDoH, contact the Provider Relations department or the OB practice consultant at **844-405-4296**.

References:

American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG). (2018, May). Optimizing Postpartum Care. acog.org/clinical/clinical-guidance/committee-opinion/articles/2018/05/optimizing-postpartum-care

Declercq, E. & Zephyrin (2020, December). Maternal mortality in the United States: A primer. *The Commonwealth Fund*. commonwealthfund.org/sites/default/files/2020-12/Declercq_maternal_mortality_primer_db

Florida House of Representatives. (2021). HB 5201 – Health Care. myfloridahouse.gov/Sections/Bills/billsdetail

Hoyert, D. (2020, April). Maternal mortality rates in the United States, 2019. *NCHS Health E-Stats*. doi.org/10.15620/cdc:103855

Swerlick, A. & Yager, A. (2021, April). *Florida senate must act on house's proposal extending postpartum Medicaid coverage to 12 months*. Florida Policy Institute. floridapolicy.org/posts/florida-senate-must-act-on-houses-proposal-extending-postpartum-medicare-coverage-to-12-months#:~:text=%EF%8E%9E%EF%82%99%EF%83%A1-Florida%20Senate%20Must%20Act%20on%20House's%20Proposal%20Extending%20Postpartum%20Medicaid%20incorporates%20this%20change%20into%20law.