Dear Members of the Wisconsin State Legislature:

We write today to urge you to **support 12-month postpartum coverage for new mothers**. Maternal morbidity and mortality rates in Wisconsin remain too high.[1] For example, severe maternal morbidity, an unexpected outcome of labor and delivery that results in significant short-or long-term consequences to a woman's health, occur in one of every 125 delivery hospitalizations. This represents a 30% increase in the last seven years[2] The rate of maternal mortality - the death of a new mother – is just as staggering. In recent years the annual number of maternal deaths ranges from 25-45.[3]

Twelve months of Medicaid coverage during the postpartum period is a key strategy to positively impact the rates of maternal morbidity and mortality, yet **Wisconsin is one of only two states that does not provide this coverage.**

As patient advocates and partners in the delivery and management of pregnancy, postpartum and newborn/infant care, the above-named organizations urge you to support 12-month postpartum Medicaid coverage. This proposal is an update to existing Medicaid eligibility. This does not expand the population currently receiving these Medicaid benefits. Please join us in supporting new mothers, which in turn improves outcomes for babies, families and communities.

Why is 12-Month Postpartum Coverage Important?
In Wisconsin 73% of pregnancy-related deaths occur during the postpartum period. Nearly all are preventable. The most common causes of pregnancy-related deaths are mental health conditions, hemorrhage and cardiomyopathy. New mothers also die from cancer, embolism, infection and neurologic conditions. Non-Hispanic Black, Non-Hispanic Asian, and Hispanic mothers represent nearly one half of all pregnancy-related deaths. [4] Women living in rural areas face greater maternal health risks than those residing in urban areas - having a 9 percent greater probability of severe maternal morbidity and mortality, compared with urban residents.[5]

Loss of insurance coverage and gaps in coverage during the postpartum period prevent a new mother from addressing or identifying chronic health conditions, discussing family planning, receiving ongoing substance use disorder treatment, and

[1] *https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/publications/p02108-2020.pdf*
[2] *https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/publications/p01125-2016-2023.pdf*
[3] *https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/publications/p03226.pdf*
[4] *https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/publications/p03226.pdf*
[5] *https://www.healthaffairs.org/doi/10.1377/hlthaff.2019.00805*

identifying and treating postpartum depression and anxiety. Access to comprehensive and uninterrupted postpartum care is key in preventing health complications and increased costs.

How Wisconsin Currently Falls Short
In Wisconsin, pregnant women who are eligible for Medicaid have coverage only through the end of the month in which their 60-day postpartum period ends. Following the 60-day postpartum period a mother's Medicaid eligibility is redetermined. A mother can only remain enrolled in the program if she continues to meet certain eligibility requirements. Her newborn child is eligible for Medicaid coverage from the date of birth through the end of the month in which the child turns one year old. 12-month postpartum coverage will allow new mothers to maintain predictable health care coverage during a crucial time. This is important to maintain access to trusted mental, behavioral and primary health providers and an affordable prescription drug benefit, but also to limit out-of-pocket costs not covered by insurance.

Importance of Uninterrupted Health Care Coverage for New Mothers
Complications during pregnancy such as eclampsia, infection, or hemorrhage require intensive care, lengthy hospital stays, or hysterectomy; and pregnancy-related complications can surface up to a year after delivery. Unmanaged pregnancy-related medical complications have lasting health consequences for new mothers and result in avoidable medical expenses. Postpartum visits allow a health care provider to intervene and provide timely and appropriate medical care to help avoid preventable and more costly health complications.

Impacts of Disenrollment at 60 Days Postpartum
New mothers who are disenrolled from Medicaid may end up in a coverage gap if they do not have access to an affordable employer-sponsored health plan. For those who may be eligible for premium subsidies in the ACA Marketplace, there are still out-of-pocket expenses which can be barriers to receiving care. Even new mothers who may have access to an affordable employer-sponsored plan or the ACA Marketplace, may experience a change in provider networks and preferred drug lists. Periods of uninsurance and underinsurance, often referred to as "churn," lead to delayed care and less preventive care. Churn disrupts the continuity and quality of care for postpartum women and contributes to poor outcomes for mom and baby, while also resulting in increased costs and administrative burdens to the health care system, including state Medicaid programs.

Maternal mortality - the death of a new mother - represents not only the loss of a woman's life, but has a lasting impact on her new baby, her family and her community. Maternal morbidity has lasting health consequences and result in avoidable medical expenses. Action is needed to improve health outcomes for mothers which in turn improves outcomes for babies. Uninterrupted health care coverage during the postpartum period will have a positive impact on the rates of maternal morbidity and mortality, help to address racial, ethnic, and geographic health disparities, and reduce gaps in health insurance coverage. **We respectfully request your support for 12-month Medicaid postpartum coverage:**

Aurora Health Care	**Nurse – Family Partnership**
Alliance of Health Insurers	**Oneida**
American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network	**Quartz**
American College of Nurse - Midwives	**Rural Wisconsin Health Cooperative**
American College of Obstetricians & Gynecologists	**Security Health Plan**
American Diabetes Association	**Society for Maternal Fetal – Medicine**
American Family Children's Hospital	**SSM Health**
American Heart Association	**ThedaCare**
Anthem Blue Cross Blue Shield Wisconsin	**UnityPoint Health**
Ascension Wisconsin	**UW School of Medicine and Public Health**
Children's Wisconsin	**UW Health**
Dean Health Plan	**UW Health Kids**
Emplify Health	**Wisconsin Academy of Family Physicians**
Froedtert	**Wisconsin Association of Health Plans**
Humana	**Wisconsin Chapter of the American College of Emergency**
Independent Care Health Plan	**Physicians**
Marshfield Clinic Health System	**Wisconsin Academy of Physicians Assistants**
Marshfield Children's	**Wisconsin Primary Health Care Association**
Mayo Clinic Health System	**Wisconsin Nurses Association**
Medical College of Wisconsin	**Wisconsin Hospital Association**
Molina Healthcare of Wisconsin	**Wisconsin Medical Society**