

ASSEMBLY, No. 3633

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED MARCH 16, 2020

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District 4 (Camden and Gloucester)

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**Assemblywomen Reynolds-Jackson, McKnight, Dunn, Jasey,
Assemblyman Stanley, Assemblywomen Vainieri Huttie, Timberlake,
Lampitt and Assemblyman Tully**

SYNOPSIS

Establishes requirements concerning the provision of postpartum care information and the development of individualized postpartum care plans.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 6/21/2021)

1 AN ACT concerning postpartum care and supplementing Title 26 of
2 the Revised Statutes.

3
4 **BE IT ENACTED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State*
5 *of New Jersey:*

6
7 1. The Legislature finds and declares that:

8 a. Pregnancy is a significant health event in the lives of many
9 women that presents unique physical, mental, and medical issues,
10 many of which a woman will not encounter at any other point in her
11 life.

12 b. Women experiencing pregnancy, particularly a first
13 pregnancy, frequently lack information and guidance concerning
14 many of the physical symptoms encountered during and after
15 pregnancy. Because so many aspects of a woman's body change
16 during pregnancy, it can be difficult to determine when a particular
17 symptom is normal or may be a sign of an adverse complication that
18 requires medical attention, particularly with regard to symptoms
19 occurring during the postpartum period.

20 c. Maternal mortality and morbidity rates have increased over
21 the last 20 years both in New Jersey and nationwide, which
22 increased rates have disproportionately affected minority
23 communities. In many cases, the common causes of maternal
24 mortality, including high blood pressure, excessive bleeding, and
25 infection, are preventable if diagnosed and treated in a timely
26 manner. Moreover, postpartum issues that are not typically fatal,
27 such as postpartum depression, can seriously impair affect a
28 woman's quality of life if left untreated.

29 d. Frequently, postpartum issues cannot be detected before the
30 woman is discharged from the hospital. Many symptoms do not
31 manifest until after the woman has returned home, and issues may
32 occur up to one year after birth. It is estimated that between one-
33 third and one-half of pregnancy-associated deaths occur during the
34 postpartum period. All women are susceptible to postpartum
35 complications, not just those identified as "high risk" for
36 complications during pregnancy.

37 e. As many as 40 percent of women never seek out or receive
38 postpartum care, which represents a missed opportunity to screen
39 for postpartum issues and provide necessary medical care.

40 f. Although New Jersey has taken significant steps to improve
41 the provision of maternity care in this State, more needs to be done
42 to ensure that women have the information and resources necessary
43 to enable them to identify and seek treatment for potentially-fatal
44 postpartum issues.

45 g. Therefore, it is essential that women have the opportunity to
46 develop an individualized postpartum treatment plan in the course
47 of prenatal care and that they be provided with postpartum care
48 information prior to discharge, including information about normal

1 and abnormal postpartum symptoms, to enable them to make
2 informed observations about their postpartum experiences and seek
3 out medical care when needed.

4
5 2. a. Health care professionals, including physicians,
6 advanced practice nurses, certified nurse midwives, and midwives,
7 who provide prenatal maternity care to a woman shall ensure that
8 the woman has the opportunity to develop a comprehensive
9 personalized postpartum care plan that is consistent with her
10 anticipated postpartum needs and plans. At a minimum, each plan
11 shall include the designation of a medical home where the woman
12 may access care and support during the period between the end of
13 the pregnancy and the comprehensive postpartum visit. If the
14 woman does not have a plan in place, the health care professional
15 shall offer to consult with the woman to develop a plan.

16 b. Each general hospital, ambulatory care facility, and birthing
17 center licensed pursuant to P.L.1971, c.136 (C.26:2H-1 et seq.) that
18 provides maternity care services shall ensure that, prior to discharge
19 following the end of a pregnancy, each woman receiving maternity
20 care services is provided with postpartum care information,
21 including information concerning the potential health issues that
22 may occur during the postpartum period and a description of the
23 risks, warning signs, and symptoms of medically-significant
24 complications that may occur during the postpartum period,
25 including severe bleeding, high blood pressure, infection, and
26 depression. For the purposes of providing postpartum care
27 information pursuant to this subsection, hospitals, ambulatory care
28 facilities, and birthing centers that provide maternity care services
29 shall adopt uniform policies, procedures, and protocols, including
30 standardized educational modules and training materials, that are
31 consistent with best practices and national standards for postpartum
32 care and the recognition and prevention of postpartum
33 complications.

34
35 3. This act shall take effect 180 days after the date of
36 enactment.

37 38 39 STATEMENT

40
41 This bill requires health care professionals providing prenatal
42 care to ensure that each pregnant woman has the opportunity to
43 develop a comprehensive personalized postpartum care plan that is
44 consistent with her anticipated postpartum needs and plans. At a
45 minimum, the plan is to include the designation of a medical home
46 where the woman may access care and support during the period
47 between the end of the pregnancy and the comprehensive
48 postpartum visit. If the woman does not have a plan in place, the

1 health care professional will be required to offer to consult with the
2 woman to develop a plan.

3 The bill additionally requires facilities providing maternity care
4 services, including general hospitals, ambulatory care facilities, and
5 birthing centers, to ensure that, prior to discharge following the end
6 of a pregnancy, all women receiving maternity care services are
7 provided with postpartum care information, including information
8 concerning the potential health issues that may occur during the
9 postpartum period and details as to the specific signs and symptoms
10 to watch for. For the purposes of providing postpartum care
11 information, the facilities will be required to adopt uniform policies,
12 procedures, and protocols, including standardized educational
13 modules and training materials, that are consistent with best
14 practices and national standards for postpartum care and the
15 recognition and prevention of postpartum complications.

16 Pregnancy is a unique event in a woman's life that involves
17 significant bodily changes that often do not occur at any other time
18 in life. Because so much of what a woman experiences during and
19 after a pregnancy is new and different, it can be difficult for women
20 to identify when a particular symptom is normal or if it requires a
21 follow-up visit with a health care professional. Maternal mortality
22 rates have increased over the past 20 years, which increase may be
23 attributed in part to treatable postpartum complications, including
24 high blood pressure, excessive bleeding, and infection. It is the
25 sponsor's belief that ensuring that women have the tools necessary
26 to identify when they are experiencing a potentially serious
27 complication following a pregnancy will help improve the quality
28 of maternity care in New Jersey and reduce the number of
29 preventable pregnancy-related deaths across all populations.