



Support during the birth process benefits moms and babies

Kids Count in Michigan | March 2023

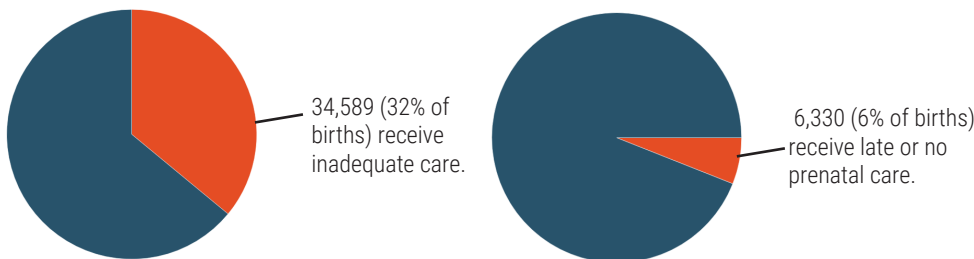
What we know

Pregnant mothers who receive labor support and have birthing options and continuous health coverage see improved outcomes.

Babies that are born healthy have a greater likelihood of successfully reaching developmental milestones on time and without intervention. The benefits of providing support for mothers and, thus, infants before, during and after the birthing experience is well documented—including lowered risk of costly interventions like cesarean section and increased likelihood of breastfeeding.¹

Unfortunately, Michigan must address concerning trends to ensure babies are born healthy.

Many moms do not have adequate prenatal care.



And concerning infant birth outcomes have plateaued or steadily climbed over the last three decades.

In 2020, **9,389 (8.7%) babies were born at low birthweight and 10,922 (10.2%) were preterm.**

Source: Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, Division for Vital Records and Health Statistics.

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There are significant disparities in maternal and infant mortality rates, and most are preventable.

Nearly **53%** of pregnancy-related deaths between 2011-2016 **were preventable.**¹

Even after controlling for differences in socioeconomic status, education attainment, health and risk behaviors, **Black women experience the highest rates of maternal mortality:** over three times that of White women.¹

Race and place impact a baby's chances of survival. In Michigan, White babies are **1.5 times more likely** to make it past their first birthday compared to Hispanic babies and over **three times more likely** than Black babies.²

Although birthing options and doula support can improve health outcomes for mom and baby, a national survey found **only about 6% used the help of a doula**.¹ Doulas in Michigan are not readily reimbursed by insurance. Without coverage, costs can range from \$800 to \$2,500, placing it out of reach for many families.¹

Funding for the Healthy Moms, Healthy Babies Initiative, including extended pregnancy-related coverage to reduce incidents of illness and preventable death, was provided through the 2021 and 2022 budgets. On April 14, 2022, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services officially approved Michigan’s state plan amendment to provide 12 months of continuous Medicaid coverage after pregnancy.

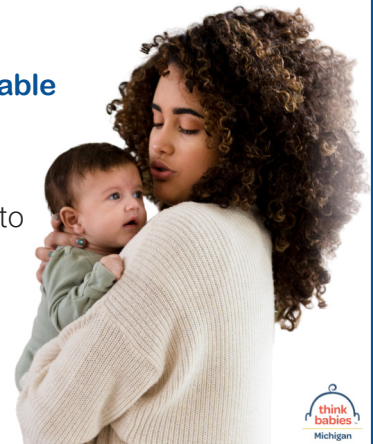
Recommendations

To support maternal and infant outcomes through accessible and affordable birthing support services, Michigan should:

Extend Continuous Eligibility: Implement multi-year continuous eligibility for children enrolled in Medicaid through age 6 and consider broadening this policy to include other public health insurance programs that Michigan residents access.

Remove the Five Year Waiting Period: Remove the waiting period for pregnant people and children who are lawfully residing (“green card” holders), through the Immigrant Children’s Health Improvement Act option.

Include responsive models of care: Support Medicaid reimbursement for the full continuum of perinatal care to address social determinants of health including doulas, birthing centers, group-based prenatal care, care received at birthing centers, and lactation support.



Sources

1. Bellazaire, Amber. *Thriving Babies Start with Strong Moms: Right Start 2020*. Michigan League for Public Policy, 2020.
2. Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, Division for Vital Records and Health Statistics.

Think Babies Michigan

is a collaborative of more than 2,000 members—leaders, experts, families, organizations and providers—working together to improve the lives of babies prenatally through age 3 in Michigan. Join at: www.ecic4kids.org/policy-thinkbabiesmi.

