



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Department of Human Services Reminds Pennsylvanians: ‘Abortion is Safe and Legal, Reproductive Healthcare is Available’

Harrisburg, PA – Department of Human Services (DHS) Special Advisor Sara Goulet, members of the Women’s Health Caucus, and representatives from Planned Parenthood today affirmed that Pennsylvanians should feel safe in accessing the full scope of reproductive, perinatal, and maternal health care available in the commonwealth, and that supports are in place to help mothers and birthing people access necessary reproductive and perinatal care.

“As reproductive rights are being rolled back across our country, I want to thank the many health care professionals in Pennsylvania who are not only taking care of people in the commonwealth, but people from other states who are coming here to get the health care they need and deserve to live healthy lives with dignity,” said Goulet. “Our fellow Pennsylvanians need to know that abortion remains safe and legal here, and that services and help with costs for reproductive and pregnancy-related health care is available.”

DHS administers the federal Medicaid program in Pennsylvania. Through Medicaid and DHS’ Family Planning Services program, individuals can receive free or reduced-cost reproductive health care. This care may include health care provider visits, birth control, testing and treatment for sexually transmitted infections (STIs), screenings and education for some types of cancer, and counseling from a health care provider about pregnancy, such as preparing for pregnancy, preventing unintended pregnancies, and enabling individuals to control the timing and spacing of pregnancies. No public funds are used for abortions except in cases of rape, incest, or when the life of the pregnant person is in danger.

“One of the primary injustices of the attack on the right to abortion is the entirely inadequate maternal health safety net we have in Pennsylvania. It can be a challenge for women to find quality, consistent care throughout their pregnancies and to access the physical and behavioral health care they need after giving birth or after a pregnancy ends,” said Representative Mary Jo Daley. “The Medicaid extension addresses this issue by extending coverage from two months to 12 months postpartum. This is just one way to ensure consistency and trust in medical coverage for women during a time of maximum upheaval.”

Since taking office, Governor Tom Wolf has prioritized reproductive rights, including expanding access to health care and supportive services for parents through pregnancy and the postpartum period and giving children a strong, healthy start that can lead to continued health, well-being, and positive outcomes throughout their lives. Most recently, [Governor Wolf issued an executive order](#) that affirms the rights and safety of health care providers and out-of-state residents to access reproductive health care in the commonwealth.

Among the Wolf Administration's investments in maternal-child care, the Medicaid postpartum coverage period was extended for mothers and birthing people who are eligible for the program because of their pregnancy to one year following the end of a pregnancy. Previously, people eligible for Medicaid due to their pregnancy received coverage for only 60 days after giving birth. Nationally, the Medicaid program pays for one in every four births. Last year, Medicaid covered nearly 44,000 births in Pennsylvania.

"We'll keep repeating it because it is clear that some people aren't hearing us: abortion is health care. And if that isn't clear enough, we'll say this – nobody, and certainly not any politician, has the right to control our bodies, our lives, or our futures," said Samantha Bombila, Chief External Affairs Officer, Planned Parenthood Keystone. "Over a dozen states have forsaken women and pregnant people by enacting abortion bans and the nation has been thrown into a national crisis. Here in Pennsylvania, abortion is legal and Planned Parenthood Keystone, along with our thousands of supporters, will continue to fight like hell for abortion rights."

More information on the postpartum Medicaid extension, and DHS' maternal-child health programs available across Pennsylvania is available online [here](#).

To learn more and apply for Medical Assistance and other assistance programs in Pennsylvania, visit www.dhs.pa.gov/compass.

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