



Submitted Photo

Staff and volunteers of the Douglas County Health Department at the vaccine clinic at North Ward held April 17.

## Ill. expands coverage for mothers

Postpartum Medicaid coverage extended from 60 days to 12 months

By Raymon Troncoso  
Capitol News Illinois

Illinois will now provide Medicaid benefits to eligible mothers for up to 12 months postpartum, a major extension from the previous 60-day limit.

Gov. JB Pritzker made the announcement Tuesday after a waiver submitted in 2019 by the state to the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services was recently approved.

"Every mother in Illinois deserves access to quality healthcare following the birth of a child, regardless of their income level," Pritzker said in a release. "I'm proud to announce Illinois is now the first state in the nation to offer eligible mothers 12 months of postpartum care coverage through Medicaid."

According to the release, the measure was pursued specifically to address the significant health disparities in maternal mortality and morbidity between Black women and their white peer groups. The Illinois Department of Public Health developed a report in 2018 that found Black women were six times more likely to die of a pregnancy related condition, with a lack of care continuity and coordination contributing to over 90 per-

cent of preventable pregnancy-related deaths in that demographic.

As a result, IDPH recommended the Medicaid extension, which was passed by the General Assembly and signed into law by Pritzker in 2019 before the state formally applied to the federal government.

Women with incomes up to 208 percent of the federal poverty level set by the federal Department of Health and Human Services will have continuous Medicaid eligibility 12 months postpartum.

"It's a good first step," state Rep. Mary Flowers, D-Chicago, said in an interview Tuesday. "I was hoping to have it expanded to 5 years because there's a lot of studies out there that shows just because 12 months passed it doesn't mean the woman's body has healed."

All child-bearing age women should have access to quality health care, Flowers said, and she stressed that a time limit could not be placed on a mother's recovery from childbirth.

Flowers sponsored legislation in 2019 to create the Task Force on Infant and Maternal Mortality Among African Americans. With assistance from IDPH, whose director serves on the task

force, it works to establish best practices to decrease infant and maternal mortality.

The task force was set to release its first report Dec. 1, 2020 and every December annually after that.

However, according to Flowers, the group missed its initial deadline due to the COVID-19 pandemic and gave lawmakers a partial report following the start of the new General Assembly. Flowers said the task force will deliver a full report soon and based on its findings she plans to draft legislation to further expand Medicaid benefits for mothers.

"I want to thank the governor for a good beginning of extending coverage under Medicaid, and I look forward to working with him to extend the program indefinitely," Flowers said. "Let the doctors decide what's in the best interest of the woman."

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## Illinois DoIT announces IT/Telecom solicitation opportunity for vendors

Illinois Department of Innovation & Technology (DoIT) announces opportunities for traditionally underrepresented minority-owned businesses in the IT/Telecom industry to become vendors for the state. This is a second solicitation opportunity for minority businesses to register for the Project/Resource Sheltered Market (PRSM) program.

The PRSM program offers minority, women and persons with disabilities owned businesses in the IT/Telecom industry the opportunity to bid on State of Illinois projects, with the goal of increasing supplier diversity in Illinois. Businesses interested in responding to the solicitation must be Business Enterprise Program (BEP) certified in order to participate.

"Bringing more diversity to our pool of IT suppliers is a key priority and the PRSM program has

been created with that goal in mind," commented Jennifer Ricker, CIO and Acting Secretary at Illinois Department of Innovation & Technology (DoIT). "Minority vendors can become prequalified, which makes the bidding process more straightforward when projects arise."

PRSM is targeted toward BEP-certified vendors when there is a resource needed for a specific and well-defined project. An Invitation for Bid (IFB) will be issued to prequalified PRSM vendors, who are able to bid for projects that fall into the following IT skills categories:

- IT Planning Services
- Information Security Services
- Software/Application Development Services
- Teaching and Learning Services
- Mobile Technology Services

- Web Content and Development Services
- Desktop Services
- Networking Services
- Infrastructure Services
- Customer Support Services

The PRSM solicitation BidBuy number is B-18480 and can be found by logging in at <https://www.bidbuy.illinois.gov/bso/external/bidDetail.sdo?docId=21-448DOIT-ADMIN-B-18480&external=true&parentUrl=close>. Minority IT/Telecom suppliers wanting to work with the State of Illinois through PRSM, who are not currently BEP certified, should contact CMS' BEP office at 312-814-4190 or via email at [BEP@illinois.gov](mailto:BEP@illinois.gov) to obtain information on certification. Additional details and timelines can also be found within the solicitation.

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