



Quick Links:

Website | Donate | Facebook | Twitter

Children's Champion

• February 12, 2020 •
Tennessee Justice Center

THE MORE YOU KNOW

Policy solutions to prevent infant and maternal mortality in Tennessee

According to America's Health Rankings, [Tennessee ranks 41st in the health of women and children](#). This poor ranking is due in large part to high rates of maternal and infant mortality. The overwhelming racial and geographic disparities and the rate of preventable deaths makes the crisis that much more important to address on multiple fronts.

[Read our recent blog post](#) to learn more about potential evidence-based policy solutions our state could pursue, including:

- Collection and publication of data on women's health
- Earlier access to prenatal care
- Coverage during preconception period
- Coverage of dental care for pregnant and postpartum women
- Additional support systems for women like reimbursement for group prenatal care, home visiting, and services provided by doulas and community health workers
- Substance use disorder treatment

We are heartened by some state and federal legislative action (highlighted below), but we encourage advocates and policymakers to dream big about everything we can do for women's health.

ICYMI

- **Children's disenrollment state audit** - A [state audit](#) shows 177,000 children lost health insurance because of paperwork, not because they were actually ineligible. While we are encouraged that the state chose to examine the issue, the audit left some unanswered questions:
 - Why did so many households never receive the renewal paperwork that TennCare contends was mailed?
 - Why was information sent in response to TennCare's requests often not linked to the correct household?
 - Why did TennCare terminate coverage for thousands of children without determining if they were actually ineligible, since we know that nearly all of them would have remained eligible because of the generous eligibility provisions of Medicaid and CHIP?
 - Why didn't the auditor interview families who were terminated for not returning the paperwork to find out why they didn't return it or if they ever received it?

We have been pushing our state officials to address this issue since we first noticed it over a year ago. Let our elected leaders know they must make sure that every eligible child gets the coverage they need: <http://bit.ly/kidscoverage>.

- **BlueCare CaringStart maternity program** - CaringStart is a maternity program that promotes healthy pregnancies by providing the expert help of nurses, social workers, and other staff. The services offered through this program are reviewing health history to determine if there are concerns, offering health tips via phone, text, and email, creating a plan of care, connecting individuals to agencies that provide additional services and addressing the needs of individuals at high risk for an early delivery. For more information, click [here](#). If you or someone you know are participating in his program, we'd love to hear about your experiences.
- **Medicaid expansion** - Republican lawmakers introduced a [Medicaid expansion bill](#) similar to Governor Haslam's Insure Tennessee plan. Medicaid expansion has many benefits; just see this compilation of [324 studies](#) that say so. Evidence shows that expansion would help women be healthier before they get pregnant, leading to better health outcomes for mom and baby. As Rep. Ron Travis said: "It is the right thing to do."

LOOKING FORWARD

Federal updates

- **Maternal Health Quality Improvement Act** - The bill would authorize grants to support innovation in maternal health programming, enable medical and nursing schools to implement programs aimed at preventing discrimination in maternity care, direct HHS to study and make recommendations for reducing provider discrimination and authorize funding for perinatal quality collaborative.
- **Helping Medicaid Offer Maternity Services (MOMS) Act** - This bill would enable states to use a state plan amendment to extend Medicaid coverage for new moms through one year postpartum, allowing them to access critical health services. The bill incentivizes this extension by providing a one-year, 5 percentage point Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (FMAP) enhancement to states who choose the option.

Contact your members of Congress to voice support.

State updates

- **Bill to extend postpartum TennCare coverage from 60 days to one year ([SB1902/HB2039](#))** - This bill provides a 12-month period of postpartum coverage for pregnant women who meet certain medical assistance eligibility requirements.
- **Bill to require doula services for medically needy TennCare recipients ([SB1804/HB1847](#))** - This bill requires that doula services be provided to recipients of TennCare; requires that the doula services be performed by a person who has received certain certification.
- **Bill to improve access to prenatal care ([SB2295/HB2522](#))**- This bill directs the Department of Health to develop a plan to ensure that 90 percent of pregnant women in this state have access to prenatal care and to report findings to relevant legislative committees.

[Contact](#) your state legislators and ask them to vote yes on these bills.

JOIN US

Children's Health & SNAP Benefits

Thursday, February 27
2 pm CT

[REGISTER HERE](#)

Middle Tennessee Anti-Hunger Meeting 2020

Join the Tennessee Justice Center and the Second Harvest Food Bank of Middle Tennessee for a summit about ending hunger in Middle Tennessee.

Second Harvest Food Bank
331 Great Circle Road, Nashville, TN 37228
9:30 am- 4:00 pm CT

[REGISTER HERE](#)

As a reminder, the Tennessee Justice Center also helps with:

1. Enrollment onto TennCare and CoverKids
2. Service Issues
3. Redetermination Issues

If you ever encounter anyone who is having trouble getting health insurance or getting health services, please call TJC: (615) 255-0331.

If there is any information you would like us to share on your behalf, including events and resources, please reply to this email.

Sincerely,



Kinika Young
Director of Children's Health
Tennessee Justice Center

[DONATE](#)

Stay connected:



Tennessee Justice Center
211 7th Ave N
Suite 100
Nashville, TN 37219
United States

outreach@tnjustice.org | 615-255-0331 | <https://www.tnjustice.org>

[Update your subscriptions](#)

{{if IsSentByTargetedEmail}}(Unsubscribing is not supported in previews)Unsubscribe{{end}}

{{Disclaimer}}