

HOUSE . . . . . No. 985

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Marjorie C. Decker and Chynah Tyler

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in General Court assembled:

The undersigned legislators and/or citizens respectfully petition for the adoption of the accompanying bill:

An Act increasing access to postpartum home visiting services.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	DATE ADDED:
Marjorie C. Decker	25th Middlesex	1/20/2023
Lindsay N. Sabadosa	1st Hampshire	1/20/2023
Samantha Montaño	15th Suffolk	1/23/2023
Josh S. Cutler	6th Plymouth	1/27/2023
Carol A. Doherty	3rd Bristol	1/31/2023
Daniel Cahill	10th Essex	2/1/2023
Steven Owens	29th Middlesex	2/2/2023
Paul McMurtry	11th Norfolk	2/2/2023
Jennifer Balinsky Armini	8th Essex	2/4/2023
Jack Patrick Lewis	7th Middlesex	2/5/2023
Jon Santiago	9th Suffolk	2/6/2023
Michelle M. DuBois	10th Plymouth	2/7/2023
Sean Garballey	23rd Middlesex	2/8/2023
Colleen M. Garry	36th Middlesex	2/13/2023
Patrick Joseph Kearney	4th Plymouth	2/16/2023
Lydia Edwards	Third Suffolk	3/9/2023
Rodney M. Elliott	16th Middlesex	3/9/2023

**HOUSE . . . . . No. 985**

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By Representatives Decker of Cambridge and Tyler of Boston, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 985) of Marjorie C. Decker, Lindsay N. Sabadosa and others relative to healthcare coverage for postpartum home visiting services. Financial Services.

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**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

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**In the One Hundred and Ninety-Third General Court  
(2023-2024)**  
\_\_\_\_\_

An Act increasing access to postpartum home visiting services.

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:*

1 SECTION 1. Chapter 32A of the General Laws, is hereby amended by inserting after  
2 section 30 the following section:-

3 Section 31. The commission shall provide to any active or retired employee of the  
4 commonwealth who is insured under the group insurance commission coverage for the universal  
5 postpartum home visiting program administered by the department of public health. Such  
6 coverage shall not be subject to any cost-sharing, including co-payments and co-insurance, and  
7 shall not be subject to any deductible.

8 SECTION 2. Chapter 111 is hereby amended by adding after Section 243 the following  
9 section:-

10 Section 244. (a) For the purposes of this section, the following words shall have the  
11 following meanings:-

12 “Department”, the department of public health.

13 “Provider”, an entity or individual that provides universal postpartum home visiting  
14 services.

15 “Programs”, entities or providers qualified by the department of public health to provide  
16 universal postpartum home visiting services.

17 “Universal postpartum home visiting services”, evidence-based, voluntary home or  
18 community-based services for birthing people and caregivers with newborns, regardless of age,  
19 income, number of children, or other criteria. Services shall be delivered by a qualified health  
20 professional with maternal and child health training, as defined by the department of public  
21 health, during at least one visit in the family’s home or a mutually agreed upon location within  
22 eight weeks postpartum, and one follow-up visit no later than three months after the first visit.  
23 Services shall include, but not be limited to, screenings for unmet health needs including  
24 reproductive health services, maternal and infant nutritional needs, substance use, emotional  
25 health including postpartum depression personal safety/domestic violence; clinical assessment of  
26 the birthing person and infant; brief intervention; education and support; referrals to community  
27 resources, such as breastfeeding supports; and follow up phone calls.

28 (b) The department shall establish and administer a statewide system of programs  
29 providing universal postpartum home visiting services. The department shall be the lead agency  
30 for the coordination of all government funding, both state and federal, for such programs. The  
31 department may contract with agencies, individuals or groups for the provision of such services,  
32 subject to appropriation. The department shall begin implementation of the universal newborn  
33 nurse home visiting program first in those communities with the greatest inequities in maternal

34 health outcomes, as identified by the department. The department shall scale up the program to  
35 achieve universal, statewide access within six years of the passage of this act.

36 (c) In designing the program designed in subsection (b) of this section, the department  
37 shall consult, coordinate, and collaborate, as necessary, with insurers that offer health benefit  
38 plans in the commonwealth, MassHealth officials, hospitals, local public health departments,  
39 birthing centers, existing early childhood home visiting programs, community-based  
40 organizations, and social service providers.

41 (d) A provider of universal postpartum home visiting services shall determine whether  
42 any recipient for whom it provides said services are or may be eligible for coverage of said  
43 services through an alternative source. The department is the payer of last resort, and a provider  
44 shall request payment for services it provides from third-party payers pursuant to chapters 32A,  
45 118E, 175, 176A, 176B, or 176G of the General Laws, before payment is requested from the  
46 department.

47 (e) The department shall collect and analyze data generated by the program to monitor  
48 and assess the effectiveness of universal postpartum home visiting services. The department shall  
49 work with other state agencies to develop protocols for sharing data, including the timely sharing  
50 of data with primary care providers of care to the families with newborns receiving the services.  
51 Programs which are in receipt of state or federal funding for said services shall report such  
52 information as requested by the department for the purpose of monitoring, assessing the  
53 effectiveness of such programs, initiating quality improvement, and reducing health disparities.

54 SECTION 3. Chapter 118E of the General Laws, is hereby amended by inserting after  
55 section 10N the following section:-

56 Section 10O. The division and its contracted managed care organizations, accountable  
57 care organizations, health plans, integrated care organizations, third-party administrators, or  
58 other entities contracting with the division to administer benefits, shall provide coverage for  
59 universal postpartum home visiting services, in accordance with operational standards set by the  
60 department of public health pursuant to section 244 of chapter 111 of the General Laws. Such  
61 coverage shall not be subject to any cost-sharing.

62 SECTION 3. Chapter 175 of the General Laws, is hereby amended by inserting after  
63 section 47PP the following section:-

64 Section 47QQ. An individual policy of accident and sickness insurance issued pursuant to  
65 section 108 that provides hospital expense and surgical expense insurance or a group blanket or  
66 general policy of accident and sickness insurance issued pursuant to section 110 that provides  
67 hospital expense and surgical expense insurance that is issued or renewed within the  
68 commonwealth shall provide coverage for universal postpartum home visiting services, in  
69 accordance with operational standards set by the department of public health pursuant to section  
70 244 of chapter 111 of the General Laws. Such coverage shall not be subject to any cost-sharing,  
71 including co-payments and co-insurance, and shall not be subject to any deductible; provided,  
72 however, that co-payments, coinsurance or deductibles shall be required if the applicable plan is  
73 governed by the Federal Internal Revenue Code and would lose its tax-exempt status as a result  
74 of the prohibition on co-payments, coinsurance or deductibles for these services.

75 SECTION 4. Chapter 176A of the General Laws, is hereby amended by inserting after  
76 section 8KK the following section:-

77           Section 8LL. Any contract between a subscriber and the corporation under an individual  
78 or group hospital service plan which is delivered, issued or renewed within the commonwealth  
79 shall provide coverage for universal postpartum home visiting services, in accordance with  
80 operational standards set by the department of public health pursuant to section 244 of chapter  
81 111 of the General Laws. Such coverage shall not be subject to any cost-sharing, including co-  
82 payments and co-insurance, and shall not be subject to any deductible; provided, however, that  
83 co-payments, coinsurance or deductibles shall be required if the applicable plan is governed by  
84 the Federal Internal Revenue Code and would lose its tax-exempt status as a result of the  
85 prohibition on co-payments, coinsurance or deductibles for these services.

86           SECTION 5. Chapter 176B of the General Laws, is hereby amended by inserting after  
87 section 4KK the following section:-

88           Section 4LL. Any subscription certificate under an individual or group medical service  
89 agreement delivered, issued or renewed within the commonwealth shall provide coverage for  
90 universal postpartum home visiting services, in accordance with operational standards set by the  
91 department of public health pursuant to section 244 of chapter 111 of the General Laws. Such  
92 coverage shall not be subject to any cost-sharing, including co-payments and co-insurance, and  
93 shall not be subject to any deductible;

94           provided, however, that co-payments, coinsurance or deductibles shall be required if the  
95 applicable plan is governed by the Federal Internal Revenue Code and would lose its tax-exempt  
96 status as a result of the prohibition on co-payments, coinsurance or deductibles for these services.

97           SECTION 6. Chapter 176G of the General Laws, is hereby amended by inserting after  
98 section 4KK the following section:-

99           Section 4LL. Any individual or group health maintenance contract that is issued or  
100 renewed within the commonwealth shall provide coverage for universal postpartum home  
101 visiting services, in accordance with operational standards set by the department of public health  
102 pursuant to section 244 of chapter 111 of the General Laws. Such coverage shall not be subject  
103 to any cost-sharing, including co-payments and co-insurance, and shall not be subject to any  
104 deductible; provided, however, that co-payments, coinsurance or deductibles shall be required if  
105 the applicable plan is governed by the Federal Internal Revenue Code and would lose its tax-  
106 exempt status as a result of the prohibition on co-payments, coinsurance or deductibles for these  
107 services.