

POLICY PRIORITY: HEALTHY PARENTS & BABIES

Comprehensive Perinatal Supports



Budget

- Secure **targeted state funding in FY 2026** for the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) and the Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services (IHFS) to continue improving **equitable access to comprehensive maternal health services**, including prenatal and postpartum mental health care



Legislation

- Extend **coverage for reproductive health and related services** under the IHFS Family Planning Program to otherwise eligible Illinoisans **regardless of immigration status**
- Pass the **Strengthening Mental Health and Substance Use Parity Act**, which would improve access to behavioral health treatment by reducing commercial insurance coverage restrictions and building network adequacy



Administration and Implementation

- Identify and establish a **statewide administrative home for Universal Newborn Support Services (UNSS)** to coordinate community expansion and reach more families
- Continue advancing key strategies within the **Title V Maternal and Child Health Block Grant Action Plan**, administered by IDPH
- Fully implement **Medicaid coverage for services provided by doulas, nurse midwives, lactation specialists and home visitors** as directed under the Improving Health Care for Pregnant and Postpartum Individuals Act (SB 967; Pub. Act 102-665)
- Implement state legislation passed in FY 2024:
 - SB 3130 (Pub. Act 103-777), **establishing pregnancy as a qualifying life event** for special enrollment in a health insurance plan once the state-based exchange is operational
 - Family Recovery Plans Implementation Task Force Act** (SB 3136; Pub. Act 103-941), creating an inter-agency task force to develop recommendations for Illinois to implement a model for serving infants with prenatal substance exposure that is less punitive for families
 - Liam's Law** (SB 3182; Pub. Act 103-948), requiring hospitals to notify the gestational parent of a stillborn fetus of the **parent's right to receive a certificate of birth resulting in stillbirth**
 - HB 5142 (Pub. Act 103-720), **requiring commercial health insurance to cover services** for pregnancy, postpartum and newborn care **provided by doulas, midwives and lactation consultants**, as well as related medical supplies, starting in 2026
 - HB 5493 (Pub. Act 103-718), **prohibiting prior authorization** by health insurers for **obstetric or gynecologic care**



Public Awareness, Engagement and Mobilization

- Engage expecting parents, new families and health professionals in partnership with the Illinois Maternal Health Task Force and Illinois Public Health Institute **to better understand the new Medicaid provider types and benefits** to support maternal and infant health
- Uplift efforts by the **Illinois Workgroup to Improve Obstetric Care and Availability in Rural Areas** to address geographic disparities in access to obstetric care and eliminate maternity care deserts
- Continue socializing key findings from the third release of the **Illinois Maternal Morbidity and Mortality Report**, published by IDPH

POLICY PRIORITY: HEALTHY PARENTS & BABIES

Strengthened Home Visiting System



Budget

- **Increase state funding by \$75M in FY 2026 for the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) to expand the Early Childhood Block Grant**, with at least 25% of new funding set aside for Prevention Initiative, including home visiting programs
- **Increase state funding by \$5M in FY 2026 for the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) to expand the Healthy Families Illinois and Maternal Child Home Visiting programs** to continue improving provider compensation and expanding access



Administration and Implementation

- As part of the transition to the **new Illinois Department of Early Childhood**, include a **statewide data system, saturation goals, new workforce pipeline opportunities** and other stakeholder recommendations for home visiting services
- Submit the state plan amendment for federal approval of **Medicaid coverage of evidence-based home visiting services**
- Include guidance and flexibility on program expansion, incentives and purchasing in the **IDHS Home Visiting Expansion Notice of Funding Opportunity for FY 2026**
- Provide the budget sample tool to all grantees receiving **ISBE Prevention Initiative Home Visiting awards** to better support program operation
- Develop a **new home visiting credential** through the Illinois Network of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies and leverage the credential to build workforce compensation and diversity



Public Awareness, Engagement and Mobilization

- Continue increasing **public understanding of home visiting and its benefits** through messaging materials, with particular focus on fatherhood engagement and home visitor descriptions
- Launch a statewide **home visitor appreciation campaign**

