



Missouri Medicaid “Show-Me Healthy Babies” Program

Background

In 2014, Missouri Governor Jay Nixon signed legislation to enact the Show-Me Healthy Babies Program (SMHB) into law. The program is separate from the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP), which provides health care to children in families with incomes up to 305 percent of the poverty level. SMHB, instead, covers unborn children by expanding health coverage to mothers. This program relies on matching funds from the federal government and therefore had to first be approved by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) before it could be implemented. After more than a year, the agency recently approved the state’s implementation plan and the state began enrollment on January 1, 2016.

What is the program and what does it cover?

To be eligible for program enrollment, the unborn child’s mother cannot be currently eligible for Missouri’s Medicaid program, MO HealthNet. She must also not have access to employer-sponsored insurance or affordable private insurance that includes maternity benefits. Currently, MO HealthNet (Medicaid) covers pregnant women up to 201 percent of the poverty level, which equates to approximately \$32,019 per year for a family of two.¹ In an effort to support healthy newborns, Show-Me Healthy Babies covers pregnancy-related services for pregnant women between 201 and 305 percent of the poverty level, or between approximately \$32,019 and \$48,587 per year for a family of two.² The law states that when calculating family size, the family should include the unborn child as well as all additional family members. Therefore, a family of two in these scenarios is comprised of a mother and her unborn child.

It is estimated that the program will cover approximately 1,800 more mothers in the state.³ The program covers all prenatal and pregnancy-related care, so long as the services benefit the health of the unborn child and “promote healthy labor, delivery, and birth.”⁴ Services that are only beneficial to the pregnant mother are not covered.

SMHB prohibits enrollment waiting periods, which guarantees presumptive eligibility for an unborn child. The child will be covered from enrollment up to one year after birth. To help foster a child’s healthy upbringing, the mother may continue to receive pregnancy-related and postpartum care for up to 60 days after birth. It is not a requirement that the pregnant mother be a citizen of the United States for the unborn child and mother to receive benefits. Instead, the child will be presumptively covered at the time of application, and benefits will end the day after discharge from the hospital after the birth unless citizenship can be determined. All other newborns will be automatically enrolled in CHIP for their first year of life.

How do women enroll in the SMHB program?

An application for the Show-Me Healthy Babies program can be submitted online at <https://mydyss.mo.gov> or by calling the Family Support Division Resource Center at 855-373-9994.

¹ Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, “2015 Poverty Guidelines”, September 3, 2015, U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, available at <https://aspe.hhs.gov/2015-poverty-guidelines>.

² Ibid.

³ Office of Missouri Governor Jay Nixon, “Missouri to expand prenatal care services to hundreds of women in 2016, Gov. Nixon announces”, December 31, 2015, available at <https://governor.mo.gov/news/archive/missouri-expand-prenatal-care-services-hundreds-women-2016-gov-nixon-announces>.

⁴ Revised Statutes of Missouri, Section 208.660, available at <http://www.moga.mo.gov/mostatutes/stathtml/20800006621.html>.