

House Bill BR 849: Extending Postpartum Medicaid Coverage to 24 Months

Representative Joshua Watkins, 42nd House District

Medicaid Oversight and Accountability Board | December 10, 2025

Addressing Kentucky's Maternal Health Crisis

7%

Late-Onset Depression

Mothers testing positive 9-10 months postpartum

44th

National Preterm Birth Ranking

Kentucky's rank out of 52 states

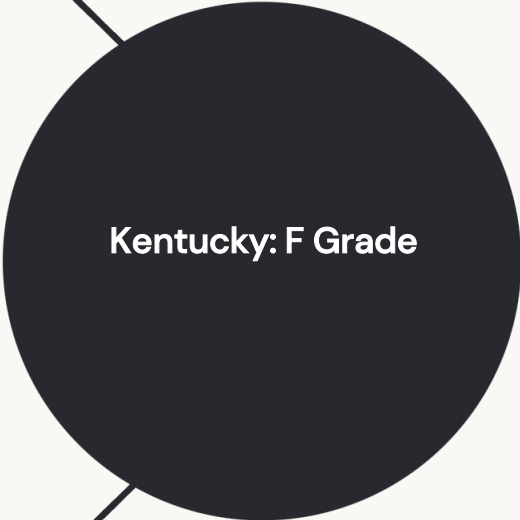
23%

Maternal Deaths

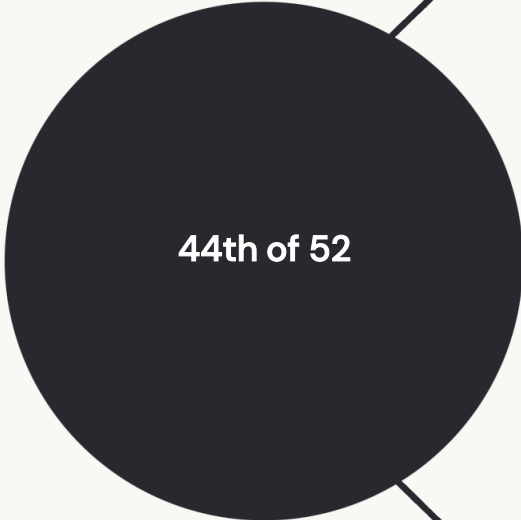
Caused by mental health conditions

Kentucky's maternal health faces significant challenges, as highlighted by its F grade in the March of Dimes report.

Failing maternal care



High maternal risk



44th worst preterm rate



Serious public health problem

Sources: March of Dimes 2025 Report Card - Kentucky; CDC Maternal Mortality Review Committees

Understanding BR 849: Coverage Extension Details



Current: 12 Months

Postpartum Medicaid Coverage

Proposed: 24 Months

Postpartum Medicaid Coverage

40%

Kentucky Births

Covered by Medicaid

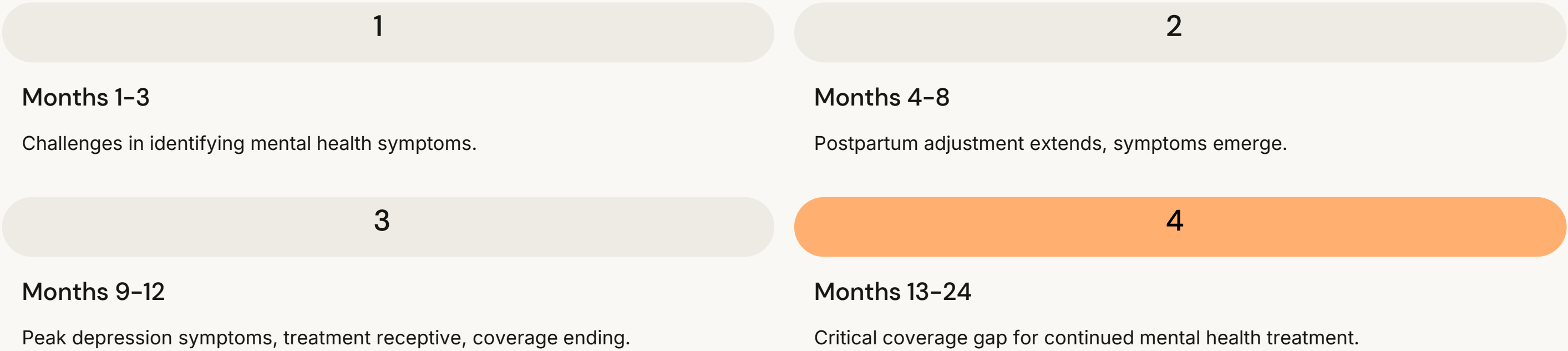
22K

Beneficiaries

Annually aided by extended coverage

Source: March of Dimes 2025 Report Card - Kentucky (Medicaid births data)

The Critical Second Year: The Impact of Extended Postpartum Coverage



\$1,000

Treatment Cost

Per mother for depression treatment

\$10,000+

Total Savings

Prevented emergency and crisis care costs

100%

Prevention Rate

Mental health deaths preventable with proper care

Sources: CDC Maternal Mortality Review Committees; Maternal Mental Health Leadership Alliance; Wilkinson et al., Maternal and Child Health Journal, 2017

Kentucky's Potential for National Leadership in Postpartum Medicaid Extension



Proven Infrastructure

Kentucky's existing framework successfully served 22,000 mothers with 12-month coverage.



National Leadership

Kentucky can be the first state to extend postpartum Medicaid to 24 months, setting a national precedent.



Measurable Impact

Extended coverage is projected to improve maternal mortality rates and save lives.



Upcoming Testimony

Shemika Whiteside, a Kentucky therapist specializing in postpartum care, will provide clinical insights on the necessity of second-year coverage for mothers and the consequences of current gaps in care.

Source: Kaiser Family Foundation Medicaid Postpartum Coverage Tracker, 2025