

February 12, 2025



**Testimony of the American Lung Association
In favor of Senate Bill 23
Senate Committee on Health**

Chair Cabral-Guevara and members of the committee,

The American Lung Association represents thousands of patients and families with lung disease in Wisconsin and are committed to ensuring that BadgerCare provides adequate, affordable, and accessible health care coverage.

We support SB 23 which would extend postpartum coverage in Wisconsin to twelve months, as this will improve access to care, help patients better manage serious and chronic health conditions and reduce negative maternal outcomes that disproportionately affect women of color.

Improving postpartum coverage is an important component of reducing maternal mortality in Wisconsin, particularly the significant health disparities we see. In Wisconsin, Black women are five times more likely to die due to pregnancy-related causes than white women. This disparity persists regardless of income or education.ⁱ

Access to care during the postpartum period is especially important for women with serious and chronic conditions that can impact maternal health outcomes, as well as for women who develop such conditions during their pregnancies. According to the CDC, cardiovascular conditions, thrombotic pulmonary or other embolism, or other non-cardiovascular medical conditions are the leading causes of maternal deaths that occur between 43 days and one year after delivery.ⁱⁱ

The postpartum period is also an important time to ensure the women have access to the support they need to quit smoking. In addition to the health impact on the mother, babies with mothers who smoke during pregnancy or who are exposed to secondhand smoke after birth have weaker lungs and are more likely to die from sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS).ⁱⁱⁱ As referenced in the [American Lung Association's State of Tobacco Control Report](#), Wisconsin's Medicaid program covers all seven FDA-approved cessation medications as well as counseling to help members of our community end their addiction to nicotine. Providing this benefit for 12 months will help people stop smoking for good.

Because this bill would help improve access to care and outcomes for new moms, the American Lung Association urges Wisconsin lawmakers to move this proposal forward.

ⁱ Kids Forward. Prioritizing maternal health and taking steps to address racial disparities. <https://kidsforward.org/governors-proposed-budget-expands-access-to-health-care-and-provides-funding-for-programs-to-reduce-racial-disparities/>

ⁱⁱ Petersen EE, Davis NL, Goodman D, et al. Vital Signs: Pregnancy-Related Deaths, United States, 2011–2015, and Strategies for Prevention, 13 States, 2013–2017. *MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep* 2019;68:423–429. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.mm6818e1>
https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/68/wr/mm6818e1.htm?s_cid=mm6818e1_w

ⁱⁱⁱ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Smoking During Pregnancy. April 28, 2020. Available at: https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/basic_information/health_effects/pregnancy/index.htm