STATE OF ARKANSAS
House of Representatives

Newsletter From Rep. David Whitaker

District 22

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2025 Maternal Health Legislation

With Mother's Day just around the corner, we are reminded of the vital role mothers play in the strength and well-being of our families and communities. This legislative session, the General Assembly made maternal health a top priority, passing a series of bills aimed at ensuring that every mother in our state has access to the care and support she needs before, during, and after pregnancy.

The cornerstone of our efforts is Act 124, the Healthy Moms, Healthy Babies Act. This legislation represents a $45.3 million investment in maternal and infant health. It establishes Presumptive Medicaid eligibility for pregnant women, meaning pregnant women can receive prenatal care while they complete their Medicaid application. And it establishes pregnancy-related Medicaid coverage for remote ultrasounds, remote blood pressure monitoring, and continuous glucose monitoring. The act also unbundles Medicaid payments for pregnancy care, paying for up to 14 prenatal and postnatal care visits.

For the first time, doulas and community health workers will be reimbursed through Medicaid, recognizing the valuable role they play in improving birth experiences and outcomes.

We also passed Act 138, allowing certified nurse midwives to admit and discharge patients from hospitals if granted privileges. This helps bridge the gap in maternal care, especially in areas where obstetricians are scarce. Act 866 furthers that goal by ensuring insurance coverage for births at licensed birthing centers, a change that can expand access to safe, lower-cost maternity care in rural parts of our state.

Another important piece of legislation, Act 627, mandates that insurance plans cover breastfeeding and lactation consultant services. Finally, Act 868 establishes a maternal outcomes management system within the Department of Health, laying the foundation for a data-driven approach to identifying and solving the challenges we still face.

There's more work to be done, but this session marked a turning point. Together, these bills form a comprehensive response to a public health crisis that touches families in every corner of Arkansas.