STATE OF ARKANSAS
House of Representatives

Newsletter From Rep. Tara Shephard

District 79

September 12, 2025

Legislative Week in Review

This week, several legislative interim committees continued their work examining key issues facing our state. On Tuesday, the Joint Performance Review Committee met to discuss citizen concerns regarding the proposed Franklin County Prison. On Wednesday and Thursday, the House and Senate Public Health, Welfare, and Labor Committees held joint meetings in Texarkana. Lawmakers received updates on a variety of critical topics, including the impact of UAMS Regional Campuses and reports from local health care providers. A major focus of the hearings was the implementation of Act 124, also known as the Healthy Moms, Healthy Babies Act, which was passed during the 2025 Regular Session. This landmark legislation includes a $45.3 million investment aimed at improving maternal and infant health across Arkansas. Key provisions of Act 124 include:

- Presumptive Medicaid eligibility for pregnant women, allowing immediate access to prenatal care while their applications are processed.

- Expanded Medicaid coverage for remote ultrasounds, remote blood pressure and glucose monitoring.

- Unbundling of pregnancy-related Medicaid payments, increasing access to up to 14 prenatal and postnatal visits.

- New Medicaid reimbursements for doulas and community health workers (CHWs), acknowledging their critical support roles during pregnancy and childbirth.

The Department of Human Services (DHS) reported that implementation of some key components is already underway. Presumptive eligibility began on June 1, 2025, with 2,232 women already enrolled. Global unbundling of pregnancy-related care began on July 1, 2025. Other components—including remote monitoring, doula coverage, and lactation specialist services—are currently under review and will soon enter the rulemaking process. The Legislative Joint Auditing Committee and its subcommittees met this week to review audit reports from municipalities, counties, and state agencies. These regular reviews are vital to ensuring fiscal responsibility and transparency at all levels of government.