



AMHERST H.
WILDER
FOUNDATION

ESTABLISHED 1906

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WILDER PROGRAMS

451 Lexington Parkway North

Saint Paul, MN 55104

651-280-2310

FAX 651-280-3995

www.wilder.org

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Chair Freiberg and members of the Health Finance and Policy Committee,

I write today to express the Amherst H. Wilder Foundation's support for HF 521. Expanding Medical Assistance eligibility for new mothers to a full 365 days is a commonsense approach to ensuring a healthy start for new mothers. The weeks and months following childbirth are some of the most memorable and difficult in a new parent's life. At Wilder, we believe in using a whole family lens, recognizing that what is happening with one member of a family has impacts on the others. Ensuring that these new parents can access the physical and behavioral health care they need to care for themselves is one way we can make sure they can give the best care possible to their new baby.

It is also important that Minnesota recognizes the birth inequities that exist in our state. According to a 2019 CDC report, Black and Indigenous mothers die at rates 3.3x and 2.5x respectively, compared to white women. Wilder is proud to be home to the African American Babies Coalition (AABC), an initiative committed to racial equity which promotes healthy development for African American Babies across the Twin-Cities. No matter when it occurs in life, the death of a parent can be challenging. When it occurs for a new baby it can have incalculable impacts on the development and the future of that child. AABC led research "Brains are Built Not Born" found 15 key factors impacting the development of babies brains. Key factor number 3, highlights how trauma(s) impact the development of a child's brain. AABC works every day to instill healthy habits in new parents to get their baby off to the best start possible, in order to do that work, it is essential that these mothers stay alive.

Thirty-six US states have already taken action to extend coverage to a year post partum. We ask that you make Minnesota the next state to take action to support new moms.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this written testimony,

Nona Ferguson
Vice President, Economic Stability & Aging Services

