

ASSEMBLY WOMEN AND CHILDREN COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

ASSEMBLY, No. 3633

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: JANUARY 25, 2021

The Assembly Women and Children Committee reports favorably Assembly Bill No. 3633.

This bill requires health care professionals providing prenatal care to ensure that each pregnant woman has the opportunity to develop a comprehensive personalized postpartum care plan that is consistent with her anticipated postpartum needs and plans. At a minimum, the plan is to include the designation of a medical home where the woman may access care and support during the period between the end of the pregnancy and the comprehensive postpartum visit. If the woman does not have a plan in place, the health care professional will be required to offer to consult with the woman to develop a plan.

The bill additionally requires facilities providing maternity care services, including general hospitals, ambulatory care facilities, and birthing centers, to ensure that, prior to discharge following the end of a pregnancy, all women receiving maternity care services are provided with postpartum care information, including information concerning the potential health issues that may occur during the postpartum period and details as to the specific signs and symptoms to watch for. For the purposes of providing postpartum care information, the facilities will be required to adopt uniform policies, procedures, and protocols, including standardized educational modules and training materials, that are consistent with best practices and national standards for postpartum care and the recognition and prevention of postpartum complications.

Pregnancy is a unique event in a woman's life that involves significant bodily changes that often do not occur at any other time in life. Because so much of what a woman experiences during and after a pregnancy is new and different, it can be difficult for women to identify when a particular symptom is normal or if it requires a follow-up visit with a health care professional. Maternal mortality rates have increased over the past 20 years, which increase may be attributed in part to treatable postpartum complications, including high blood pressure, excessive bleeding, and infection. By ensuring that women have the tools necessary to identify potentially serious complications following a pregnancy, this bill will help improve the quality of maternity care in New Jersey and reduce the number of preventable pregnancy-related deaths across all populations.