

IDAHO MATERNAL AND INFANT HEALTH REPORT 2023 SUMMARY

Healthy Moms, Strong Babies: Opportunities to Improve Maternal and Infant Health in Idaho

Key Takeaways

1. Idaho's Maternal & Infant Health Trends are Worsening

Too many Idaho mothers are not receiving routine prenatal care that is crucial to healthy pregnancies and babies. Providing women with comprehensive health coverage leads to greater preventive care, lower maternal mortality rates, and better birth outcomes.

- In 2022, 1 in 5 (4,549) Idaho mothers did not receive any prenatal care during their first trimester.
- In 2021, 3 out of 10 mothers lacked health insurance prior to their pregnancy.
- 56% of pregnancy-related deaths occurred between 43 and 365 days after birth.

Many infants in Idaho are missing critical opportunities to stay on track for healthy development and experience higher risk of missing key early detection opportunities for chronic disease or health conditions.

- In 2022, 8.8% of births were preterm, and 7.1% of babies were classified as low birth weight.
- Over 85% of children ages 9-35 months did not receive a doctor-recommended developmental screening.

2. Idaho's Medicaid Eligibility Rates & Postpartum Coverage Options Lag Behind the Nation

Idaho's income eligibility level for pregnant women with Medicaid **ranks last in the nation**, and Medicaid coverage for pregnancy ends after just 60 days postpartum, cutting off access to care at a critical time for new mothers.

- **Idaho's Medicaid income levels for pregnant women have not been updated since 1990.**
- Idaho's income eligibility level for pregnant women on Medicaid is \$34,307 a year for a family of 3.
- Thirty-five states cover pregnant women at or above \$49,720 a year for a family of 3.

Additionally, Idaho's income eligibility level for children on the Children's Health Insurance Plan (CHIP) **ranks second to last in the nation**, resulting in coverage gaps that can lead to children missing out on important well-child checkups and routine medical care.

- **Idaho's CHIP income levels for children have not been updated since 2004.**
- Idaho's income eligibility level for children on CHIP is \$47,234 a year for a family of 3.
- The national median income eligibility limit for children on CHIP is \$63,393 a year for a family of 3. Every state, except Idaho and North Dakota, covers children at or above \$49,720 a year for a family of 3.

From
2019 to 2021



**Maternal
mortality
rate up
121.5%**



**Infant
mortality
rate up
18%**

3. Medicaid is an Essential Lifeline for Pregnant Women & Children in Idaho

Medicaid's Role for Idaho Moms

Medicaid can ensure that new mothers in Idaho have reliable health insurance during and after their pregnancy. Women on Medicaid have access to regular prenatal visits, important screenings, and delivery of the new baby. Medicaid is even more vital for rural parts of the state. In 2022, Medicaid covered 48% of births in Lemhi County, 47% in Shoshone County, and 52% in Lincoln County.

Medicaid & CHIP's Role for Idaho Kids

Having consistent health insurance coverage is essential for children's healthy development, especially during the earliest years of life. Medicaid and CHIP provide health insurance coverage to Idaho's lowest-income and most vulnerable children, youth in foster care, and kids with disabilities and complex medical needs. Medicaid and CHIP protect low-income families from the financial burden of services like therapies for developmental delays, or unexpected health events, such as cancer or a broken bone.

Almost half of Idaho infants and toddlers (43.5%) live in households with low incomes (\$55,000/year for a family of 4). Medicaid and CHIP are typically the only affordable health coverage options for these families.

Uninsured women are unable to access a marketplace health insurance plan outside of open enrollment periods as pregnancy is not considered a "qualifying event." Meaning, that uninsured women who get pregnant are faced with the choice of not getting health care or thousands of dollars in doctor and hospital bills they simply cannot afford. Medicaid does not have open enrollment periods, meaning if they qualify for Medicaid, they could get coverage at any time.

HEALTHY MOMS, STRONG BABIES: IDAHO KIDS COVERED POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Idaho Kids Covered urges lawmakers to implement the following policies that support healthy moms and strong babies.

1. Increase income eligibility levels for pregnant women in Medicaid with postpartum coverage

extending to 12 months: Idaho should increase its Medicaid income eligibility levels for pregnant women to the national average of \$50,963 a year (for a family of three) and extend Medicaid postpartum coverage from 60 days to 12 months. Doing so would provide more new moms access to affordable health coverage for necessary services, including behavioral health services and key prenatal screenings that help ensure the mom and baby stay healthy.

Recent polling shows

77% of Idahoans support more funding for Medicaid maternity care services.

69% of Idahoans support extending Medicaid postpartum coverage to 12-months.

2. Increase income eligibility levels for children in CHIP: In order for kids to access health services, they first need access to health coverage. Idaho should increase its CHIP income eligibility levels for children to the national average of \$63,393 a year (for a family of three) which would increase access to affordable health insurance for Idaho kids in low-income families.

This is a summary of a more detailed, in-depth report. For a breakdown of Medicaid & CHIP income limits, and the full list of references, read the [Idaho Maternal and Infant Health Report 2023](https://bit.ly/3TPVdDV) (bit.ly/3TPVdDV). To learn more about Idaho Kids Covered, visit idahokidscovered.org.