



Better Health, Stronger Families: Improving Medicaid Coverage of Continuous Glucose Monitors in Alabama

Diabetes in Alabama: An Ongoing Threat

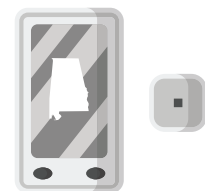
Alabama experiences some of the highest rates of diabetes in the country, resulting in an estimated \$5.9 billion in costs for the state as well as devastating health outcomes.¹ While many efforts to combat diabetes focus on older populations, women of reproductive age and their children continue to be impacted by this disease. Nearly 5% of women aged 18–44 in Alabama report being diagnosed with diabetes, and an additional 6% are diagnosed with gestational diabetes, a form of diabetes that occurs during pregnancy.²

Unmanaged diabetes before and during pregnancy can have devastating effects on the health of pregnant women and babies. Diabetes during pregnancy puts women at increased risk of life-threatening conditions like preeclampsia and can result in critical complications for the baby, such as trouble breathing, hypoglycemia and birth defects.³ Further, complications from birth can lead to greater health needs for infants and children as they grow, creating a domino effect of increased health costs for families and the health care system at large.

The Power of Continuous Glucose Monitors (CGMs): Better Health for Moms and Babies

For women with diabetes prior to pregnancy and women who develop gestational diabetes, **monitoring and maintaining normal blood glucose (sugar) levels is critical to the health and safety of both mom and baby.**⁴ CGMs, a temporary medical device that attaches to the body to continuously estimate and report blood sugar levels, help pregnant women manage diabetes and improve health outcomes.

CGMs empower and inform pregnant women with diabetes by providing them with real-time updates on their blood sugar levels. The device sends alerts when levels drop too low or become too high and helps women track patterns in glucose levels so that they and



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their doctors can make informed decisions about necessary health care interventions.⁵ **CGMs are found to significantly improve blood sugar management and reduce health care costs**, and they have the potential to reduce negative health outcomes for pregnant women with diabetes — a win-win for both mom and baby.⁶

Unfortunately, pregnant women in Alabama face significant barriers to accessing the CGMs that they need. The devices can cost thousands of dollars and Alabama Medicaid, the largest insurer of births in the state, excludes coverage of the device for pregnant women with gestational diabetes.

Medicaid coverage of CGMs for pregnant women with diabetes will help thousands of women across Alabama manage their diabetes to support their health and the health of their babies.

Covering CGMs for a Healthier Alabama

To ensure CGMs are accessible to everyone who needs them, Alabama Medicaid must cover CGMs as a pharmacy benefit for all adults and children with diabetes who are on insulin, and all pregnant women with diabetes, including those with gestational diabetes. Covering CGMs as a pharmacy benefit would:

- **Improve** the health of all Alabamians, including pregnant women and children.
- **Reduce** health inequities for low-income families, Black families, and rural communities.
- **Eliminate** red tape for children and families impacted by diabetes.
- **Bring** Alabama on par with other states' Medicaid and commercial CGM pharmacy coverage.
- **Lower** hospitalization rates and generate public health savings.

For endnotes visit familiesusa.org/cgms-alabama/



About Families USA

Families USA, a leading national, non-partisan voice for health care consumers, is dedicated to achieving high-quality, affordable health care and improved health for all. Central to Families USA's mission is a commitment to improving maternal health for pregnant women across the U.S. We strive to ensure every pregnant woman has access to the affordable, and high-quality health care they need to achieve their best health.