

THIS MOTHER'S DAY, LET'S CELEBRATE THE MOTHERS ACT!

AS PART OF THE HEALTH INSURANCE REFORM, CONGRESS PASSED AND PRESIDENT OBAMA SIGNED THE MELANIE BLOCKER STOKES MOTHERS ACT INTO LAW!

AFTER A FIVE YEAR FIGHT TO EDUCATE LAWMAKERS AND GET IT PASSED, THIS NEW LAW WILL BEGIN IN EARNEST THE FEDERAL EFFORT TO COMBAT POSTPARTUM DEPRESSION.

HERE IS A PRIMER ON THE NEW LAW, WHICH WAS AUTHORED BY U.S. SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ (D-NJ) AND REP. BOBBY RUSH (D-IL). PLEASE SHARE IT WITH ANYONE WHO MIGHT BE INTERESTED.

HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY!

THE MELANIE BLOCKER STOKES MOTHERS ACT: HOW IT WILL HELP OUR NATION'S NEW MOTHERS

A Document Created by the Office of Senator Robert Menendez

The Melanie Blocker Stokes MOTHERS Act is designed to help new mothers get through postpartum depression and to help scientist get to the bottom of it.

Education, support services and research – those are the three areas in which the MOTHERS Act will begin building what will hopefully become a long-lasting and effective federal initiative to combat this debilitating condition.

Here are some commonly asked questions – and answers – about the new law:

Q: Some people still think postpartum depression is just the “baby blues.” Will this law help raise awareness of PPD – both for new mothers and the general public?

A: Absolutely. It will help initiate a National Public Awareness Campaign to increase awareness and knowledge of postpartum depression and psychosis. This could include public service announcements on TV and radio that emphasize the basics of PDD and awareness about screening.

Q: We still have a lot to learn about why women get postpartum depression and how best to help them with treatment. How will this law help get us that information?

A: This law will help scientists get to the bottom of postpartum depression. The federal government will coordinate and continue research on the causes of PPD and hopefully develop new methods of treatment, which will ultimately help inform doctors and other medical professionals.

Q: Will new support services for mothers suffering from PPD be available?

A: This law encourages the creation of a program to give grants to start local support service programs – one that will hopefully grow over time as it is proven effective. Local community organizations, hospitals or even state or local governments can apply for funding to provide education and services with respect to the diagnosis and management of PPD.

The grants could also be used to provide education about postpartum conditions to promote earlier diagnosis and treatment. For instance, if the recipient is a medical facility, the grants could be used to educate new mothers and family members about postpartum depression before new mothers leave the health facility.

Q: What does this new law include on screening for postpartum depression?

A: It sets a path toward the most effective screening and diagnostic techniques with a new federal study over the next two years. It allows for increased awareness about screening.

It is also worth pointing out that the health insurance reform law requires that all new insurance plans cover comprehensive women's preventative care and screenings.