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## Medicaid pays for nearly half of all US births

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By: Contemporary OB/GYN Staff



In 2010, Medicaid financed 48% of all births in the United States, an increase of 19% in the proportion of all births covered by Medicaid in 2008. This finding, from a study published in the Sept. 2013 issue of the journal *Women's Health Issues*, adds to previous research showing that the numbers of women dependent on Medicaid for health care are growing.

The article notes that the majority of women enrolled in Medicaid (72%) are in their reproductive years (ages 18–44) and qualify on the basis of 1) income and/or 2) pregnancy, disability, or by the virtue of being working or nonworking parents. Under federal law, states participating in the Medicaid program are required to cover pregnant women, infants, and young children ages 0 to 5 whose income is below 133% of the federal poverty level (FPL) and school-aged children ages 6 to 18 whose income is under 100% of the FPL.

Overall, according to the article, northeastern and northwestern states in the United States tend to have the lowest proportion of births financed by Medicaid, whereas southern states tend to have the highest proportions of Medicaid-financed births. Arkansas, Louisiana, Maine, Mississippi, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico each reported that more than 60% of births were financed by Medicaid in 2010.

Additionally, the study found that Medicaid covers complex births disproportionately, paying for more than half of all hospital stays for preterm and low birth weight infants, and about 45% of hospital stays for infants with birth defects in 2009.

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