



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Lea Webb

Senator Webb Highlights Reproductive Health Wins in 2024 Session

LEA WEBB July 24, 2024

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New York Senate Democrats continue to make strides in achieving reproductive equity

Binghamton, NY - During this past year, State Senator Lea Webb, Chair of the Women's Issues Committee, worked to support reproductive health, patient privacy, and improve birthing outcomes across New York State. These efforts included passage of major maternal health milestones, including the Reproductive Freedom and Equity Grant Program and Maternal Health Care and Birthing Standards workgroup. These efforts will increase access to quality care, including doula and mental health care, and improve the safety and access of menstrual

products.

Senator Webb proudly sponsored and passed six reproductive health bills this year, including victories such as coverage for remote patient monitoring services, the development of a mobile application for pregnant and postpartum Medicaid recipients, and guaranteeing access to emergency contraceptives on SUNY and CUNY campuses.

Senator Lea Webb said, “I am extremely proud of the work we accomplished this year to increase access to quality maternal and reproductive health care in New York. We know that these issues disproportionately impact people of color and rural communities, which often experience poor health outcomes. It is critical that everyone gets equitable access to comprehensive healthcare including but not limited to timely prenatal care, safe birthing experiences, comprehensive postpartum care, and reproductive health services. I will keep working towards more equitable reproductive and maternal health care throughout our state.”

This year’s legislative accomplishments included a comprehensive **Maternal Health package**, which included the passage of the following bills:

- **Reproductive Freedom and Equity Grant Program:** This bill, **S348C**, sponsored by Senator Cleare, establishes a grant program to build reproductive healthcare provider capacity within the state, fund uncompensated care, and provide financial support for patients.
- **Protection of Health Information:** This bill, **S158E**, sponsored by Senator Krueger, provides additional rights and protections regarding the sale of private health information.
- **Special Enrollment Period Protections for Pregnancy:** This bill, **S201**, sponsored by Senator Cleare, bars health insurance plans from imposing a fee or penalty for obtaining coverage when pregnant.

- **Requires Maternal Depression Screenings to New Moms:** This bill [S2039B](#), sponsored by Senator Brouk, directs the Department of Health and Mental Health to develop guidelines for the incorporation of maternal depression screenings into routine prenatal and postpartum care.
- **Hospital Transparency Act for policy-based exclusions:** This bill, [S1003A](#), sponsored by Senator Hinchey, ensures access to information regarding available insurance coverage for care at hospitals in the area prior to enrollment, and works to identify health care deserts in the state.
- **Maternal Health Care and Birthing Standards Workgroup:** This bill, [S7702A](#), sponsored by Senator Webb, directs the Commissioner of Health to convene a workgroup of maternal medicine professionals to study and make recommendations on maternal health care and birthing standards.
- **Maternal Mortality Data in Informational Materials:** This bill, [S3610](#), sponsored by Senator Webb, requires hospitals to distribute information on the racial statistics on maternal death for the facility, as well as their safety protocols and assessment plans, and the resources available for patients who experience stillbirth.
- **Maternal Care Mobile App for Medicaid Recipients:** This bill, [S7700A](#), sponsored by Senator Webb, directs the Department of Health to create a New York-specific mobile application for pregnant and postpartum Medicaid recipients with information and materials on available resources.
- **Uterine Fibroid Awareness Campaign:** This bill, [S3219A](#), sponsored by Senator Cleare, works to raise public awareness by distributing educational materials on the elevated risks of uterine fibroids for minority women, as well as , symptoms and treatment.
- **Protecting Access to Doulas:** Two bills, [S5991A](#) and [S5992A](#), sponsored by Senator Persaud, help protect doula access by allowing doulas in operating rooms during cesarean deliveries and prohibits hospitals and birthing centers from denying access to doulas

upon admission.

Additional reproductive health legislation that was passed this year includes:

- **Coverage for Remote Ultrasounds and Fetal Non-Stress Tests:** This bill, [S7690](#), sponsored by Senator Webb, fully covers these remote patient monitoring health services under Medicaid to encourage provider utilization.
- **Ban on Carcinogenic Substances from Menstrual Products:** This bill, [S3529C](#), sponsored by Senator Fernandez, prohibits restricted substances in menstrual products including talc, lead, mercury, and other added substances.
- **Free Menstrual Products at Public Universities:** This bill [S5910B](#), sponsored by Senator Hinchey, requires all public colleges and universities to provide free menstrual products in their restrooms for students.

The FY 2025 State Budget reproductive and maternal health victories include:

- **Community Doula Expansion Grant Program:** Creates a one-year program to provide funding to community-based organizations for recruitment, retention, and start-up, as well as administrative costs, to increase the number of community doulas. It also allows the Health Commissioner to issue a statewide, non-patient specific order to provide doula services for any pregnant, birthing, or postpartum individual.
- \$5 million total for Maternal Health Grant programs.

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