

Legislative Agenda

2025

Open Arms firmly believes that equity is a birthright and that healing solutions comes from within communities.

Each year, we prioritize legislation to reduce racial disparities in perinatal and infant health, improve essential support for families, and increase equitable access to healthcare.

We work alongside partner organizations and community members to advance birth equity and health justice at the local, state, and federal levels.

MATERNAL & INFANT HEALTH

SHB 1824 - Accredited birthing centers - Establishes that a birthing center that maintains accreditation by the American Association of Birth Centers is not required to undergo inspections by the Department of Health (DOH) as part of its ongoing licensure.

SB 5642 - Medicaid clients/metrics - Directs the Health Care Authority (HCA) to develop education and outreach materials for Medicaid clients to encourage better health outcomes and an implementation plan to incentivize Medicaid managed care organizations (MCOs) to improve their performance measures for breast and cervical cancer screenings, the timeliness of prenatal care, and postpartum care.

SHB 1291 - Maternity services costs - For health plans that provide coverage for labor and delivery services, labor and delivery services are not subject to the enrollee's deductible.

SSB 5075 - Prenatal and postnatal care - Prohibits health plans, from imposing cost sharing requirements on covered prenatal and postnatal services.

SSB 5217 - Pregnancy accommodations - Requires an employer to pay an employee for break and travel time to express milk during work at the employee's regular compensation rate, in addition to meal and rest periods. Allows a person with an infant under 12 months old to request a delay or excusal from jury service if the person is unable to serve due to having an infant under 12 months old.

ESSB 5557 - Pregnancy/emerg. treatment- Codifying emergency rules to protect the right of a pregnant person to access treatment for emergency medical conditions in hospital emergency departments.

Budget: Support a budget proviso to continue a doula hub, which provides technical support for doulas seeking professional credentialing at the Department of Health and Medicaid credentialing at the Health Care Authority. Also, support a professional credentialing waiver at the Department of Health.

INFANT MENTAL HEALTH, EARLY CHILDHOOD & EARLY LEARNING

HB 1350 & SB 5500 - Modernizing reimbursement rates for the working connections child care programs. Allow eligible children to access available ECEAP slots when they turn three

HB 1314 & SB 5297 - Make the Early Learning Facilities Fund more accessible

HB 1357- Support Funding for Special Education and Support for Inclusionary Practices. In particular, part of the bill that makes sure that Early Support for Infants and Toddlers (ESIT) is re-linked to funding rates for preschool special education rates. This ensures that ESIT automatically gets rate increases when preschool special education does, which prevents unintentionally underfunding ESIT programs.

SB 5263 - Funding special education, which has ESIT included

EQUITABLE ACCESS TO CARE

SSB 5182 - Incarcerated parents - Allows the Department of Corrections to contract with a nonprofit organization or partner with volunteers to deliver midwifery or doula services to incarcerated individuals.

SB 5244 - Allows Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Nutrition Program providers to perform infectious disease tests using finger-stick sampling. This simple but important change would remove a major workforce barrier for community health clinics, where finding licensed staff for essential tests can be difficult.

JUSTICE & SAFETY

E2SSB 5098 - Restricting the possession of weapons on the premises of state or local public buildings, parks or playground facilities where children are likely to be present, and county fairs and county fair facilities.