

1 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

2 Section 1. Article 51 of Chapter 58 of the General Statutes is amended by
3 adding a new section to read:

4 **"§ 58-51-38. Direct access to obstetrician-gynecologists.**

5 (a) Each health benefit plan shall allow each female plan participant or beneficiary
6 age 13 or older direct access within the health benefit plan, without prior approval or
7 referral, to the health care services of an obstetrician-gynecologist participating in the
8 health benefit plan.

9 For purposes of this section:

10 (1) 'Health benefit plan' means an HMO subscriber contract or any
11 preferred provider, exclusive provider, or other managed care
12 arrangement offered under a health benefit plan, as defined in G.S. 58-
13 50-110(11).

14 (2) 'Health care services' means the full scope of services provided by the
15 participating obstetrician-gynecologist in the care of or related to the
16 female reproductive system and breasts, and in performing annual
17 screening, counseling, and immunization for disorders and diseases in
18 accordance with the most current published recommendations of the
19 American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, and includes
20 services provided by nurse practitioners, physician's assistants, and
21 certified nurse midwives in collaboration with the obstetrician-
22 gynecologist in the care of the participant or beneficiary.

23 (b) Each health benefit plan shall inform female participants and beneficiaries in
24 writing of the provisions of this section. The information shall be provided in benefit
25 handbooks and materials and enrollment materials.

26 (c) This section does not prevent a health benefit plan from designating a qualified
27 obstetrician-gynecologist as a primary care physician for the health benefit plan if the
28 obstetrician-gynecologist is providing the full range of primary care services required
29 under the health benefit plan."

30 Sec. 2. This act applies to health benefit plans issued, renewed, or amended on
31 or after January 1, 1996.