

**To:** AmeriHealth Caritas Louisiana Providers

**Date:** March 9, 2026

**Subject:** Overutilization of Antibiotics

**Summary:** Overutilization of antibiotic drugs can contribute to the development of antibiotic-resistant bacteria, making future infections harder to treat.<sup>1</sup>

Overuse of prescription antibiotics leads to unnecessary costs and potentially adverse effects. Excessive use of antibiotics also hastens the pace at which antibiotic-resistant bacteria can adapt, creating resistance.<sup>1</sup>

According to 2024 CDC data, the southern U.S. leads the nation in outpatient antibiotic prescriptions, with Louisiana's rate (1,047 per 1,000 people) exceeding the national average of 752 by 39%.<sup>1,2</sup>

Optimizing antibiotic use is crucial for safeguarding public health. The CDC's "**Be Antibiotics Aware**" campaign is a national education effort to help improve antibiotic prescribing and combat antibiotic resistance. A "**Be Antibiotics Aware Partner Toolkit**" aiming to improve antibiotic prescribing and use among consumers is available.<sup>3</sup> More information, including patient handouts, posters, stickers, and videos, can be found [here](#).

### Strategies to Reduce Antibiotic Use<sup>3</sup>

- **Virus vs. Bacteria:** Explain that antibiotics do not work on viruses and provide examples of each.
- **Side Effects and Risk:** Explain potential common side effects of antibiotics.
- **Antibiotic Resistance:** Explain that taking unnecessary antibiotics helps bacteria learn how to fight them off, making future infections harder to treat.
- **Symptoms:** Recommend ways to help patients feel better when antibiotics are not prescribed, and when to seek care if they do not feel better.
- **Promote:** Explain that washing hands before eating, after using the bathroom, and after coughing/sneezing, along with a balanced diet, exercise, and stress management, can help prevent the need for antibiotics.

Disclaimer: Physicians and other health care providers are solely responsible for the treatment decisions of their patients and should not use the information in this communication to substitute independent clinical judgment.

### Questions:

Thank you for your continued support and commitment to the care of our members. If you have questions about this communication, please contact AmeriHealth Caritas Louisiana's Provider Services department at 1-888-922-0007 or your [Provider Network Management Account Executive](#).

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**Need to update your provider information?** Send full details to [network@amerihealthcaritasla.com](mailto:network@amerihealthcaritasla.com)

### **References:**

1 CDC- Antibiotic prescribing and use <https://www.cdc.gov/antibiotic-use/hcp/data-research/stewardship-report.html>

<sup>2</sup> CDC-Outpatient Antibiotic Use. <https://www.cdc.gov/antibiotic-use/media/pdfs/2024-Annual-Report-508.pdf>

3 Be Antibiotics Aware Partner Toolkit <https://www.cdc.gov/antibiotic-use/php/usaaw-partner-toolkit/index.html>