

To: AmeriHealth Caritas Louisiana Providers

Date: May 14, 2024

Subject: Performance Improvement Project - Addressing Congenital Syphilis through Improved Syphilis Screening for Pregnant Enrollees

Summary: The statewide congenital syphilis rate in Louisiana has increased from 29.1 per 100,000 live births in 2011 to 106.9 per 100,000 live births in 2022.

Effective prevention and detection of congenital syphilis depend on identifying syphilis among pregnant women; therefore, routine serologic screening of pregnant women is required during the first prenatal visit at 28 weeks' gestation, and an additional time at delivery.

In 2021, Louisiana had the third highest case rate in the nation with 110 congenital syphilis (CS) cases—an increase of 75% compared to 2020; 65% of cases occurred among black women, and 64% of mothers were under the age of 30 at delivery. During this same time, all nine of Louisiana's public health regions reported CS cases involving pregnant women and their babies. The most missed care opportunity among mothers linked to 2021 CS cases was the lack of timely syphilis retesting within the third trimester (44%).

Procedure Codes to Identify Syphilis Testing:

80055	Prenatal Panel
80081	Prenatal Panel with HIV
86592	Syphilis test, non-treponemal antibody; qualitative (e.g., VDRL, RPR, ART)
86593	Syphilis test, non-treponemal antibody; quantitative
86780	Antibody: Treponema pallidum
87285	Infectious agent antigen detection by immunofluorescent technique; Treponema pallidum
87164	Dark field examination, any source (e.g., penile, vaginal, oral, skin); includes specimen collection
87166	Dark field examination, any source (e.g., penile, vaginal, oral, skin); without collection

Perinatal Enhancement Program (PQEP) is a reimbursement system developed by AmeriHealth Caritas Louisiana for participating obstetric, midwife, and family practice practitioners who provide obstetric care. Quality performance determines any incentive payment received through this program; performance is based on completing specific quality measures, including third-trimester syphilis screening.

For more information, contact Provider Services at 1-888-922-0007 or visit the AmeriHealth Caritas Louisiana resource page for Providers at:

<https://www.amerihealthcaritasla.com/provider/resources/qep.aspx>.

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 Provider Services at 1-888-922-0007 or your [Provider Network Management Account Executive](#).

Missed an alert? You can find a complete list of provider alerts on our website's [Provider Newsletters and Updates](#) page.

Need to update your provider information? Send full details to network@amerihealthcaritasla.com.

References

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Sexually Transmitted Infections Treatment Guidelines, 2021 *Congenital Syphilis*, July 2021.

<https://www.cdc.gov/std/treatment-guidelines/congenital-syphilis.htm>.

Louisiana Department of Health. Louisiana Health Alert Message 23-07. *Increasing Numbers of Syphilis, Congenital Syphilis and Diagnoses of Other Sexually Transmitted Infections Across Louisiana*, May 2023.

<https://ldh.la.gov/assets/oph/Center-CP/HANs/2023/HANS23-07-IncreasingNumbersSyphilis-Congenital-Syphilis-Diagnoses-Sexually-Transmitted-Infections-Louisiana.pdf>

Louisiana Department of Health. *Louisiana Congenital Syphilis PIP Charter, March 21, 2024*.