



Maternal and Child Health Access

1111 W. Sixth Street, Suite 400
Los Angeles, CA 90017-1800
Tel 213. 749. 4261
Fax 213. 745. 1040
info@mchaccess.org

MCH Access Monthly Meeting

Thurs., June 16, 2005, 10 AM – 12 Noon (Third Thursday monthly)
1111 W. 6th St., Fourth Floor. Parking in back – enter 2-story parking on 5th St.

“The State of Reproductive Health Care in Los Angeles and California”
Susan Berke Fogel, Esq.

Updates: State Budget, Health Coverage Programs, Legislation

In this mailing:

- **AB 624 alert – please write or call!**
- ***NY Times*, 6-7-05, ‘Lactivists’ Taking Their Cause, and Their Babies, to the Streets**
- ***LA Times*, 6-6-05, “A Long Road to Prenatal Medical Care”**
- **June 21, 9-3, “Worry-Free Advocacy”**
- **June 21, 9-4:30, “Promoting, Supporting and Protecting Breastfeeding in the African American Family”**
- **June 23, 8-12:30, “African American Women and Heart Disease”**
- **“New Contraceptive Policy for County Public Health STD Clinics”**
- **“Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services Issues Final Guidance on Reimbursing Health Care Providers for Emergency Services to Uninsured Immigrants”**

Materials distributed May 19 (call for copies):

Lactation Reimbursement Materials:

- MCHA PowerPoint presentation: Medi-Cal Reimbursement for Lactation Services
- Packet of breastfeeding-related materials compiled by MCHA including information from CPSP, Medi-Cal Policy letters, Lactation ICD-9 Coding, and state memorandum on Rental of Hospital-grade Electric Breast Pumps.
- AB 624 letter to Assembly Appropriations
- LAC/DHS Nutrition Health Educator positions
- *Sacramento Bee*, 5-17-05, “Abortion measure to be on ballot”
- CHI Community Forum 6-14, 2-3:30
- Forum - Identifying Health Disparities
- Town Hall Meeting Judy Chu 5-20

- Crisis in Emergency Care, 5-20
- Grand Opening Farmers Market Leimert Park
- MCHA Trainings on Health Programs
- Action Day for Better California 5-25
- *LA Times* 5-11-05, “Proper restraint critical for kidskids”

Medi-Cal Reimbursement for Lactation Services: Introduction

Low-income women have access to breastfeeding education and support through WIC and other programs, but lack adequate access to lactation services for problems with breastfeeding. MCH Access conducted preliminary research on this issue by interviewing lactation consultants and their billing department representatives from local community clinics and hospitals. Overall, we found that for the most part, lactation consultants and Medi-Cal providers are not getting Medi-Cal reimbursement for lactation services and are instead seeking other avenues to provide such services to their clients. We spoke with numerous contacts at the state and national levels to find out how to improve the reimbursement system.

Presentations/Case Examples

Agnes de la Vega, MCH Access . Vivian Weinstein/W.M. Keck Policy Fellow

Agnes presented an overview of the breastfeeding-related components of the Comprehensive Perinatal Services Program (CPSP), Medi-Cal (both Fee-For-Service and Medi-Cal Managed Care), Durable Medical Equipment (DME), overall barriers, and offered suggestions for potential improvements. The PowerPoint presentation details specific findings and research from our needs assessment. Agnes also shared information obtained from the Medi-Cal

Policy Division on the number of paid breast pump claims for the years 2002-2004 (a chart with this information was included in the packet of materials distributed). Overall, paid claims have substantially declined over the last three years, for unknown reasons.

Magdalena Estrada, ICCE, IBCLC, California Hospital, Women's Health Center and Dee Clay & Asela Chavez, Wilmington Community Clinic provided background to their sites' billing practices and experiences with both FQHC status and interaction with managed care plans and prior authorization.

Carol Phillips, PHN, Comprehensive Perinatal Services Program, provided an overview of the CPSP, including the combined prenatal and postpartum assessments that providers are required to do, which include infant feeding assessments. Copies of the assessment were distributed, as well as the protocols that providers are supposed to use for intervention/following up on infant feeding plans.

Discussion

Additional information was shared via the meeting participants and speakers on the phone, including:

- Lactation consultants cannot bill Medi-Cal independently because they are not licensed and could not get licensure except through legislation.
- The moratorium on issuing new DME provider numbers was instituted seven years ago, but is specific to pharmacies/DME suppliers.
- The \$2.72/day rental rate for a hospital grade electric breast pump would have to be increased via legislative action.

Several Issues were identified needing further clarification or additional exploration.

A letter requesting clarification and making recommendations will be sent

- Who can request prior authorization?
- Can women get pre-authorization (before infant's birth) for breast pumps, since it takes so long at the time they are needed?
- Can lactation services be billed on the child's Medi-Cal card?

Potential changes/improvements: Register complaints for denial of claims to the State Insurance Commissioner's Office or others – need standardized way to register complaints that all providers and consultants know of and regular feedback on amount/type of complaints. Further explore possible negative impact of breast pumps as DME and exempt breast pumps from current restrictions on DMEs .January 2005 Governor's Summit on Obesity

Prevention - increasing access to lactation services could come through this obesity initiative. The Governor's recommendations will be available for public comment. When it is released, distribute to lactation groups for comment.

- Carla Robles of the Medi-Cal Policy Division will research the issue of billing on the child's card.
- Clarify HMO process for Medi-Cal: is there an urgent request/authorization process? Can one be created? Work with HMOs to educate providers.
- Explore the possibility of billing on the mother's Medi-Cal card beyond the 60 day postpartum period for a woman who continues her Restricted Medi-Cal.

Note: Luz Chacon will develop a letter(s) to follow up with appropriate officials. For further information, to express interest and/or to provide positive or negative billing examples, contact her at (213) 749-4261. She is also the contact for copies of the packet of information provided or more detailed minutes from the meeting.

NEW since meeting:

Hospital waiver creates concerns: A difference of opinion exists over the proposal by the Schwarzenegger administration to create a new federal waiver for the way "disproportionate share" hospitals (those that see many Medi-Cal and uninsured) are reimbursed (see LA Times, 6-10-05, "State Plan for Poor's Healthcare Draws Fire"). The California Hospital Association is certain some hospitals would close if the deal is pushed through. At the very least there is agreement that no increases would occur in the later years of the five-year arrangement, which would cost hospitals due to health care inflation. Public hospitals also say they would have to seek shortfalls in funding from counties.

Look for more information and a sample letter or action at our meeting. Call if you cannot attend but want the action item –

Healthy Kids wait list now created – give feedback! The wait list for new older applicants (6-18) is now in place. Please let us know how it is working for your clients. Call Liz or Celia (213) 749-4261.