



**Louisiana Department of Health
Informational Bulletin 16-17
September 2, 2016**

Prevention of Unintended Pregnancy and Risks Associated with Zika

The purpose of this Informational Bulletin is to inform Medicaid agencies, providers, and stakeholders about the Department's efforts through Medicaid and the Office of Public Health to prevent and address Zika virus and associated reproductive health risks to Medicaid beneficiaries.

Zika Virus & Unintended Pregnancy

- Zika disease (Zika) is caused by the Zika virus, and is commonly spread through the bite of an infected mosquito (*Aedes aegypti* or *albopictus*), but **can also be transmitted via sexual contact**, mother to child, and blood transfusion.
- Louisiana has had confirmed travel-associated cases of Zika in the state. Local transmission has not yet been documented in Louisiana, but the mosquitoes that transmit Zika are present in the summer months.
- **Zika infection during pregnancy can cause very serious birth defects** such as microcephaly and other severe fetal brain defects, as well as eye defects, hearing loss, and impaired growth in infants.
- **The majority (60 percent) of pregnancies in Louisiana are unintended.**
- **Family planning services and contraceptive supplies available through Medicaid are critical**, given the serious effects of Zika on pregnant women, fetuses and children, and families.

Prevention: Family Planning and Contraceptive Services for Men and Women of Childbearing Age

Family Planning Counseling

Decisions about pregnancy intentions and planning are personal and complex. Women and their partners should be given the opportunity to discuss these topics with a trusted healthcare provider. Counseling should be aimed at helping individuals make informed and responsible decisions about family planning, reproductive health, and contraception, particularly in the context of their personal risk for Zika exposure. As part of this counseling with healthcare providers, women and their partners at risk of acquiring Zika might decide to delay pregnancy. Contraception will be a key tool in preventing unintended pregnancies and the health

conditions associated with Zika, such as microcephaly. Family planning counseling for women and men may include assessment of:

- Reproductive Life Plan (current and future pregnancy intentions, desires, and plans for number and spacing of children).
- Risk for Zika exposure.
 - Recent or planned travel to a Zika-affected area by patient or their partner
- Risk for unintended pregnancy.
- Current use of contraception, including consistency and accuracy.

Counseling and education, as appropriate, regarding:

- **The full range of FDA-approved contraceptive methods for preventing unintended pregnancy, including highly effective Long-Acting Reversible Contraception (LARC) methods- intrauterine devices (IUDs) and contraceptive implants.**
 - Considerations for the safety, effectiveness, availability, and acceptability of methods relative to that individual woman.
- Correct and Consistent Use.
 - How to use contraception the right way every time.
- Zika virus disease risks.
- Zika prevention strategies, particularly safe sexual practices to reduce the risk of sexual transmission of Zika.

Contraceptive Supplies & Services

Many women are not aware of all contraceptive options available to them, which is a critical first step to ensuring access to the best method for their individual needs. All methods of contraception to prevent or delay pregnancy are covered for Healthy Louisiana beneficiaries, including LARC methods. Many types of providers, including family medicine, internal medicine, pediatric, OB/GYN physicians, and APRNs, can offer access to contraception for their patients. Even when all contraceptive methods are not offered, providers are encouraged to offer assessment and counseling followed by referral. It is imperative that women be provided counseling and education on the full range of FDA-approved contraceptive methods, including and especially, the availability of highly effective LARC methods with which they may be less familiar.

Covered Louisiana Medicaid Family Planning & Contraceptive Services

- ✓ **Assessment and counseling related to family planning**
 - **CPT Codes 99401-99404 may be used, as appropriate, for additional preventive counseling**

- ✓ **Coverage of all FDA-approved contraceptive methods:**
 - **LARC, including both intrauterine devices (IUDs) and contraceptive implant (see below for ordering/billing resource)**
 - **Device, insertion, and removal**
 - **Follow-up care**
 - **Oral Contraceptive Pills, Shot, Ring, Patch, Diaphragms**
 - **Male and Female Condoms**
 - **Emergency Contraception**

Available Resources

- Providing Family Planning Care for Non-Pregnant Women and Men of Reproductive Age in the Context of Zika: A Toolkit for Healthcare Providers (Office of Population Affairs)
<http://www.hhs.gov/opa/news#toolkit2>
- Providing Quality Family Planning Services: Recommendations of CDC and the US Office of Population Affairs (QFP)
<http://www.cdc.gov/reproductivehealth/unintendedpregnancy/qfp.htm>
- Healthy Louisiana Informational Bulletin 16-11: Billing and Ordering Guidance for Long Acting Reversible Contraceptives (LARCs): Intrauterine Devices (IUD) and Implants
<http://new.dhh.louisiana.gov/index.cfm/page/1198/n/311>
- US Medical Eligibility Criteria for Contraceptive Use, 2016 (US MEC)
<http://www.cdc.gov/reproductivehealth/contraception/usmec.htm>
- US Selected Practice Recommendations for Contraceptive Use, 2016 (US SPR)
<http://www.cdc.gov/reproductivehealth/contraception/usspr.htm>

Take Home Points

It is imperative that we prevent Zika infection among women who are pregnant or may become pregnant, as the social and economic implications of Zika disease among the unborn and infants is massive. Treatment of Zika disease among this vulnerable population is enormously costly, in terms of disability, long term services, and human harm. According to the CDC and Kaiser Family Foundation, the lifetime cost of care for a single child with microcephaly may range from \$1 to \$10 million. Due to the high prevalence of unintended pregnancy in Louisiana, **contraception is a critical tool in Zika prevention, alongside vector control mosquito bite precautions.** Providers are alerted to the importance of screening patients for risk of travel-related exposures to Zika, as well as risk of unintended pregnancy.

Zika is a reportable disease in Louisiana. To discuss a possible exposure, request laboratory testing, or report a suspected case, contact the Louisiana Office of Public Health Infectious Disease Epidemiology immediately at (504) 568-8313, or after hours 1 (800) 256-2748.