

# progress NOTES

Summer 2008

## CMO Message

By Fred M. Volkman, M.D., FAAP



With our membership being comprised mainly of children, we have a special concern for the health of babies in South Carolina. Therefore, with spontaneous pre-term births increasing in the state, Select Health decided to combat this problem.

Last year, Select Health set a goal to decrease the incidence of very low birth weight infants (defined as 1500 grams and under) and pre-term births. To help meet this goal, some of our physician members of the Total Quality Committee recommended forming a Maternal Fetal subcommittee to develop guidelines and/or recommendations utilizing newer technology. In addition, this group will focus on increasing member awareness on the importance of early and consistent prenatal and postpartum care.

This committee, consisting of Drs. Susan Keeshan, Amy Picklesimer, Peter VanDorsten, myself and Select Health Prenatal lead Leann Isenhour, RN, met in December. The

group is focusing on the prophylactic use of 17-Alpha Hydroxyprogesterone (17P) to target spontaneous preterm births. The drug is generally given between 16 to 34 weeks of gestation. Studies have revealed that the prophylactic use of 17P has shown a 30% risk reduction rate for pre-term single deliveries. The group has identified barriers such as OB-GYN physician awareness of the benefits of 17-P, drug availability, reimbursement shortfalls and early identification of our high-risk pregnant members.

We currently have a prenatal incentive program, and we identify at-risk members through the pregnancy risk assessment form that is faxed to the plan from the physician offices. The Maternal Fetal subcommittee supports these programs and will assist in educating their colleagues, work through barriers and evaluate other initiatives to decrease the incidence of pre-term and very low birth weight infants.

## Introducing First Choice Kids

**First Choice Kids** is our new health plan under the Healthy Connections Kids program — an expansion of the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP). Healthy Connections Kids is a stand-alone SCHIP program that covers children under age 19 whose family income is between 150-200% of the Federal Poverty Level. The program is specifically designed for uninsured children whose family earns too much for Medicaid.

This program will be beneficial to you in that it will turn many of the uninsured children in our state into insured, paying patients. It also has the potential to increase your patient load.

### Eligibility

Children may qualify if they:

- Are legal U.S. citizens and residents of South Carolina
- Have a Social Security Card, or the family agrees to apply for the card
- The family's countable resources (such as cash and money in bank accounts) total \$30,000 or less
- Are under 19 years of age
- Don't have comprehensive health coverage
- Have been uninsured for three months unless their health coverage was involuntarily dropped

In addition, the child's family must also meet specific income guidelines.

### Benefits

Covered services include:

- Doctor visits
- Well-child visits
- Immunizations

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## Sumter Family Health Center Creates STAR Program

Sumter Teens Acting Responsibly (STAR) is an eight-week program for young women, which was developed by the Sumter Family Health Center.

Dr. Carol B. Alan of Sumter Family Health was tired of seeing teenagers who were pregnant or had sexually transmitted diseases. She said she saw a need in the community for education about these issues.

So, the STAR program was created to teach girls about pregnancy prevention, STDs, domestic violence, peer pressure and drugs and alcohol with the goal of helping these young women make better, more educated decisions.

The first STAR program started in January 2008 and consisted of 10 girls who ranged in age from 11 to 16.

The second group of adolescent girls had to complete an application process and will start the STAR program in June. For the second round, Dr. Alan is aiming to engage more experts from the community in the program to talk to the girls.

## Shooting Hoops for Asthma

With the epidemic of asthma among our children, Select Health and our parent company, AmeriHealth Mercy, recognized the need to improve the health outcomes of children suffering with asthma. The Healthy Hoops program was then developed as an innovative, community-based approach to positively change behaviors of school-aged children and their families affected by asthma.

In 2005, the program expanded to Select Health. Healthy Hoops South Carolina uses basketball as a platform to teach participants and their families how to manage asthma through appropriate medication usage, proper nutrition, monitored exercise and recreational activities. In addition to the focus on asthma management, Healthy Hoops also addresses childhood obesity by working to increase the cardiovascular activity of children, especially those who suffer from asthma.

Since its inception in South Carolina, Healthy Hoops has touched the lives of more than 2,000 families throughout the state, including 635 children with asthma, providing them with life-saving asthma information and resources.

In addition to activities in the Midlands and Upstate, our Healthy Hoops program expanded in 2007 to include activities in the Charleston area with College of Charleston's Coach Bobby Cremins.

For more information about Healthy Hoops, visit [www.selecthealthofsc.com](http://www.selecthealthofsc.com) or call Chakira Hogan, at 843.569.4888.

### Upcoming Healthy Hoops Events

June 14	Charleston Challenge
Oct. 4	Midlands Challenge
Oct. 18	Upstate Fest
Nov. 1	Charleston Fest



## Pharmacy Update: Preferred Prenatal Vitamins

Select Health is creating a list of preferred prenatal vitamin products. Currently, any "generic" prenatal vitamin product is considered a preferred product. However, due to the various preparations and costs associated with this wide range of products, we are implementing a preferred list of covered prenatal vitamins to ensure our members have access to appropriate, cost-effective medicines.

In addition to the preferred generic list, we are also adding a preferred branded product that contains docosahexaenoic acid (DHA). DHA is a long chain omega-3 fatty acid. Suggested health benefits of DHA supplementation include increased birth weight, prevention of preterm birth and decreased risk of pre-eclampsia. Benefit outcomes of DHA in clinical trials and research are conflicting. So, there is limited scientific evidence supporting maternal DHA

supplementation. If DHA supplementation is initiated, 200-300mg/day will be the suggested dosage. To allow our members access to an acceptable DHA containing product, we are adding Duet DHA@Stuartnatal@Vitamins and Duet DHA@EC Stuartnatal@Vitamins to the preferred drug list.

Please refer to the list of preferred products below. If you have any questions regarding this change, please call **1.866.610.2773** to speak with one of our clinical pharmacists.

### Summary Of Preferred Prenatal Vitamins

- AMINATE WITH 90MG IRON
- CO-NATAL FA
- KPN
- MATERNITY
- MYNATE 90 PLUS
- NATALCARE PIC
- NATALCARE PIC FORTE

- NATALCARE PLUS
- NATALCARE RX
- NATALCARE THREE
- NATATAB FA
- PERRY PRENATAL TABLET
- POLY IRON PN
- POLY IRON PN FORTE
- PRENATAL
- PRENATAL FORMULA
- PRENATAL LOW IRON
- PRENATAL MR 90 FE
- PRENATAL MTR
- PRENATAL PLUS
- PRENATAL RX
- PRENATAL S
- PRENATAL VITAMINS
- PRENATABS FA
- PRENAVITE
- RIGHT STEP PRENATAL VITAMINS
- TRICARE
- TRINATE
- VINATE-M

### Preferred DHA Prenatal Vitamins

- DUET DHA STUARTNATAL VITAMINS
- DUET DHA EC STUARTNATAL VITAMINS



## Getting to Know Your Latino/Hispanic Patient

Over the last decade, the Hispanic/Latino population in South Carolina has increased by 212 percent. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, about 135,000 Hispanics/Latinos currently reside in our state. However, the USC Consortium for Latino Immigration Studies suggests that the actual number of Hispanics/Latinos in South Carolina may be at least twice the number reported.

Many healthcare providers across the state see an increased number of Hispanic/Latino patients. Therefore, it is essential for all providers and their support staffs to have the appropriate resources to communicate effectively with the diverse populations that they serve.

One must never assume that all Hispanics/Latinos share the same beliefs and perceptions around health and illness. Although there are many similarities among Hispanics/Latinos, the cultures within their population are uniquely diverse. Always take the time to acknowledge the individuality of your patient in regards to their: country of origin, preferred language, family dynamics, definition of health and illness, education level, occupation, etc. These are common indicators as to how any patient perceives illness and makes decisions about their health.

### Always...

- Inform patients that they have a right to an interpreter.
- Ask patients how they would like to be addressed.
- Ask about the use of traditional remedies.
- Consider the impact religion may

have on your patient's healthcare decisions.

- Understand concerns about depression.
- Ask your patients who they want to be included in medical decisions.
- Keep in mind that the family is an important source of emotional support. Take the time to educate the family on the patient's recovery process. Remember that patients like to see and embrace their family members.

### Non-verbal Communication

- Avoiding eye contact with professionals and healthcare providers may be a sign of respect or that your patient feels uncomfortable or nervous. This may be related to the socio-economic status or occupation of your patient.
- When your patient nods his/her head, it may be an indication that he/she is listening, rather than agreeing. Often, silence may signify disagreement or misunderstanding. Always ask open-ended questions, and encourage the patient to ask questions as well.

Please note that this article was not written to serve as a substitute for getting to know your patient, but rather to increase provider and patient communication. Always take the time to make your patients feel comfortable while respecting their personal values and beliefs.

For more information or if you have a question, contact Jill Lemay, Cultural Competency Coordinator, at 843.569-5218 or [jillian.lemay@selecthealthofsc.com](mailto:jillian.lemay@selecthealthofsc.com).



## Coding Reminders

- **Allergy Testing:** Remember that when billing for 95115 or 95117 that these codes include the professional services necessary for allergen immunotherapy. The minimal established E & M code 99211 may be billed in addition to 95117 for observation purposes. Other visit codes (99212-99215) may be used **only if another separately identifiable service is provided at that time.** Antigen extract or venom are separately billable.
- **Circumcisions:** For babies 28 days or older, circumcisions (CPT code 54161) require prior authorization.

## Information

To get current information, view claim status, and check out member eligibility, visit the **Select Health website at [www.selecthealthofsc.com](http://www.selecthealthofsc.com).**

## Screening for Cervical Cancer

Cervical cancer is the easiest female cancer to prevent with regular screening tests and follow-up. Yet in 2004, South Carolina had a cervical cancer incidence rate of 7.1-9.0 per 100,000 women and a mortality rate of 2.27-3.2 per 100,000. And in the United States, more than 74,000 women were diagnosed with a cancer affecting the reproductive organs.

The Pap test is recommended for all women no more than 3 years after first having sex, no later than age 21 and every year until age 30. After age 30, women who had only normal results can have a pap smear every 2-3 years.

We are committed to ensuring that our members get this important screening at no cost to them. We will continue to provide educational material, incentives and well-woman reminders to our members who are eligible for this screening.

Source: CDC website

## First Choice Kids continued...

- Vision care
- Dental care (provided through Medicaid)
- Inpatient and outpatient hospital visits
- Emergency care
- Labs and x-rays

Certain services and prescriptions will require prior authorization (PA). Authorization requests for medications should be directed to Pharmacy Services at 866.610.2773 or 866.610.2775 (fax). If you are unsure if a service requires PA, call Medical Services at 866.299.9594. Pharmacy PA forms can be found on our website, [www.selecthealthofsc.com](http://www.selecthealthofsc.com).

Claims should be submitted to Select Health of South Carolina Claims Processing Department, P O Box 7120, London, KY 40742 or led electronically through your claims vendor. For details, contact Emdeon, our claims clearinghouse, at 800.845.6592.

For more information, visit [www.selecthealthofsc.com](http://www.selecthealthofsc.com) and click on "First Choice Kids" or contact your local Network Management Representative.



## Improvements to our Prenatal Incentive Program

We have recently enhanced our incentive program for moms-to-be to encourage them to go to their prenatal visits. We now offer two \$50 gift cards to women who are enrolled in First Choice by the end of their 12th week of pregnancy.

The first \$50 gift card is given to eligible moms who have their first prenatal visit during their first trimester. We use the Prenatal Risk Assessment Form that is completed by the provider to determine if the member had this visit within the required timeframe.

The second \$50 gift card is awarded to members who complete all of their visits prior to delivery per American College of Obstetricians and Gynecolo-

gists (ACOG) standards and their postpartum visit within 3 to 8 weeks after delivery. The members will ask their provider's office to sign a form to confirm that they attended these scheduled visits.

Our hope is not only to help moms-to-be purchase some of the supplies needed for their new baby but also to encourage earlier and more consistent prenatal care ... with the end result of healthy moms and babies.



If you think you know of someone who is abusing the benefits provided by First Choice or Medicaid, please call Select Health of South Carolina (843.569.1759) or the Corporate and Special Investigations Unit (1.866.833.9718).

*Your thoughts, comments, and suggestions are welcome.*

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