

## Talking Points for Meetings with Private Insurance Representatives

### **1. Provide a brief overview of the health departments' safety net role in the health care system of every community even with the Affordable Care Act in place.**

Local Health Departments (LHDs) are an important provider in the community's health care safety net. LHDs have a long history of providing an array of clinical services as part of the overall core public health services to people un- and underserved by the private health care system. Since LHDs participate in the 340B drug pricing program under the Public Health Service Act, and provide clinics in Title X family planning, sexually transmitted disease, and tuberculosis, LHDs are designated as essential community providers.

In Kentucky, the Department for Public Health (DPH) provides guidelines and instructional materials to assist LHDs in operating their programs and services. LHDs operate in accordance with state laws and regulations, the Administrative Reference for Local Health Departments (AR), and the Core Clinical Service Guide (CCSG).

The CCSG contains guidelines and protocols for LHD nurses to use in providing core clinical public health services (e.g. see #2 below). Each section is divided into two categories: clinical protocols for a LHD nurse and information required for LHD patient case management. Guidelines are recommendations for patient management that identify and/or support the use of a range of patient care interventions and approaches. Protocols are authoritative statements requiring a physician's signature. These guidelines and protocols represent levels of care considered appropriate for staff at LHDs and are intended to be used without modification.

The AR includes policies, procedures and other relevant information to conduct Local Health Department operations. The AR also describes the rigorous Quality Assurance/Quality Improvement (QA/QI) program that DPH provides for all state and federally funded programs conducted at LHDs, which include on-site reviews to ensure the effective delivery of programs and services.

### **2. Describe the preventive health care services that health departments provide for which we are requesting reimbursement of public health RN services:**

- Well child exams (with referrals to on-going care)
- Immunizations – children and adults (e.g. TDap, Hepatitis A & B, Zoster, Flu)
- Pregnancy tests (with referrals to on-going care)
- Oral Health-Dental Fluoride Varnish
- TB skin tests
- Sexually transmitted infections screening and treatment as needed
- Family planning including pre- and post-counseling of visit with nurse practitioner
- Cancer screening including pre- and post-counseling of visit with nurse practitioner
- Home visits (e.g. prenatal/post-partum, elevated lead levels in children, tuberculosis)

**3. Describe the manner of service provision at Health Departments including what differentiates a public health nurse at a local health department from a private doctor's office nurse:**

**TRAINING.** Clinical services in LHDs are provided by physicians, nurse practitioners, and specially trained, certified public health nurses who work under protocols for core public health services signed by a licensed physician. These public health nurses must go through an extensive training process to demonstrate competency and must avail themselves of on-going training and certification to provide these clinical services.

The American Nurses Association "Public Health Nursing: Scope and Standards of Practice" practice guidelines describe the standards of practice, standards of professional performance and provide measurement criteria for public health nursing care. In order to remain consistent and in alignment with these nationally recognized standards of public health nursing practice, the DPH AR section entitled "Training Guidelines and Program Descriptions" provides specific training matrix guidelines and program overviews for public health nurses providing clinical services in LHDs.

**QUALITY ASSURANCE/QUALITY IMPROVEMENT.** LHDs also differ from private and other public medical clinics in that in addition to the DPH QA/QI program, the LHDs are also required to maintain an ongoing quality assurance program to objectively and systematically monitor and evaluate the quality of public health services and resolve identified problems. This LHD QA program must include chart reviews of medical records; community satisfaction surveys; and a review of administrative data and outcomes based on the LHD's community plan. The findings, interventions implemented, and recommendations to assure continued improvement must be provided to the Board of Health and Cabinet for Health and Family Services per regulations. Quality Assurance ensures that patient care has been delivered according to the protocols, guidelines and policies set forth in the CCSG and AR.

**NATIONAL ACCREDITATION.** Furthermore, a number of LHDs in Kentucky have become nationally accredited through the Public Health Accreditation Board. This designation indicates that the LHD has met national standards for carrying out essential public health services.

**4. Explain that we are an essential community provider (ECP) – ECP's are required in their panel per the Affordable Care Act.**

Local health departments are essential community provider. The Affordable Care Act and federal regulations (45 CFR 156.235) require that all qualified health plans sold through exchanges must have a sufficient number and geographic distribution of essential community providers to ensure reasonable and timely access to a broad range of such providers for low-income, medically underserved individuals in the plan's service area. LHDs can help fulfill the requirement for essential community providers in an insurance company's network as required by the Affordable Care Act.

**5. Show how the RN services we provide help them achieve their goals (establish the mutual benefits that health department RN services can provide):**

- Increased access to preventive services for patients in their covered population. LHDs have extensive experience in working with low-income, medically underserved populations. These clients are already coming to LHDs for services, so it would be a great benefit to them to be able to use their benefits where they traditionally get their care.
- LHDs have highly trained staff with the ability to educate patients as well as provide the clinical services.
- LHDs can help insurance companies meet their quality measures (HEDIS) for their covered populations in the following areas:

Effectiveness of care

- Weight assessment and counseling for nutrition and physical activity for children/adolescents
- Childhood and adolescent immunization status, including HPV for female adolescents
- Lead screening in children
- Breast and cervical cancer screening
- Flu vaccination for adults (18-64 and 65 and older)
- Pneumococcal vaccination status for older adults

Access/Availability of Care

- Adults' access to preventive/ambulatory health services
- Prenatal and postpartum care

Utilization and Relative Resource Use

- Frequency of Ongoing Prenatal Care
- Well child visits in the first 15 months of life, third, fourth, fifth and sixth years of life
- Adolescent well care visits

Health Plan Descriptive Information

- Weeks of Pregnancy at time of Enrollment

(Source: *Summary Table of Measures, Product Lines and Changes; HEDIS 2015 Volume 2*)

**6. Ask for an application to become a preferred provider in their network for public health RN services.**

There is already precedence for reimbursing LHDs for public health RN services.

- Medicaid already reimburses for these services.
- LHDs have a partnership with VaxCare for immunizations. VaxCare bills (and gets paid) for immunizations provided by public health nurses.

*Note:* If the rep says they can't pay for public health RN services, elucidate their concerns/ barriers to contracting these services (e.g. why can't it be done? why can't public health RN's be credentialed? What would have to happen/change to make this happen? Who has that power/authority to make the change?)