OBSTETRICIAN-GYNECOLOGISTS ARE PRIMARY CARE PHYSICIANS

A Tradition of Providing Primary Care to Women

- Preventive counseling and health education are essential and integral parts of the practice of obstetrician-gynecologists.¹
- During the annual well-woman examine, ob-gyns provide:
  - Screening
  - Evaluation
  - Counseling
  - Immunizations
- The annual exam provides an excellent opportunity to counsel patients about maintaining a healthy lifestyle and minimizing health risks.
- Ob-gyns focus on more than the reproductive system, providing:
  - Nutritional and exercise counseling
  - Cardiovascular disease screening
  - Diabetes screening, diagnosis, and management
  - Risk counseling and discussion of psychosocial topics, including mental health issues and substance use disorders
  - Cancer screening: colon, lung, breast, cervical, endometrial, and ovarian
- Family planning and sexually transmitted infection screening are strong components of preventive health care and central to well-woman care.²

Women’s Health Must Be Included in Medicaid Primary Care Access Program:

- Ob-gyns deliver primary and preventive care services to women; an ob-gyn is often the only doctor a woman sees on a regular basis.
- 35 state Medicaid programs already classify ob-gyns as primary care providers.³
- 12% of women ages 18-64 rely on Medicaid for their health care coverage and more than 68% of adult Medicaid beneficiaries are women.⁴
- Prior to the implementation of the Section 1202 Primary Care Access Program, many states reimbursed well below Medicare rates for primary care.
  - In 2012, Rhode Island’s Medicaid program paid only 33% of Medicare reimbursement for primary care.⁵
- Nationally, providers receive 67% less in Medicaid reimbursement compared to Medicare for primary care services.⁶
- Medicaid expansion under the Affordable Care Act (ACA) may give 7 million more women health care coverage in 2014,⁷ but will they be able to find a doctor?
Obstetrics and Gynecology Resident Training Requirements

PRIMARY AND PREVENTIVE AMBULATORY HEALTH CARE

Ob-gyn residents are trained to treat women from adolescence through post-menopause.

Primary care is integral in ob-gyn training. Ob-gyn residents are trained to:

- Obtain a complete medical history, including a history of genetic diseases
- Perform an appropriate general or focused physical examination
- Develop & communicate an ongoing management plan for the patient’s needs or concerns
- Perform routine, age-appropriate screenings for selected diseases, including:
  - Substance use
  - Sexual and reproductive health and STIs
  - Personal safety
  - Psychosocial risks and well-being
  - Nutrition and physical activity
  - Breast disorders
  - Risk assessments for cancer and cardiovascular disease
  - Vaccines
- Counsel patients on:
  - Importance of healthy diet & exercise
  - Risk factors & health problems associated with substance abuse
  - Weight management
  - Contraception
  - Prevention of STIs
  - Preserving good dental health
  - Prevention of osteopenia and osteoporosis
  - Psychosocial issues
  - Sexual health & well-being

Provide front-line immunizations, such as:
- Hepatitis A & B
- Herpes zoster
- HPV
- Influenza
- Measles
- Meningitis
- Mumps
- Pneumococcal pneumonia
- Rubella
- Tdap
- Varicella

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1 American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. The Scope of Practice of Obstetrics and Gynecology. Approved by the Executive Board on February 6, 2005.
3 Based on ACOG review of state Medicaid regulations, statutes, and provider manuals.
6 Ibid.