



STATE OF MARYLAND

DHMH

Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

201 W. Preston Street • Baltimore, Maryland 21201

Martin O'Malley, Governor – Anthony G. Brown, Lt. Governor – Joshua M. Sharfstein, M.D., Secretary

September 24, 2014

Dear Colleague,

About half of all births in Maryland are unintended and about one in five mothers report they are not using postpartum contraception. We are writing to ask you to enhance access to women's health services, and improve birth outcomes by providing access to long-acting reversible contraception, otherwise known as LARC.

The American Congress of Obstetrics and Gynecology (ACOG) recommends that LARC methods, such as intrauterine devices and contraceptive implants, be offered as first-line contraceptive methods and should be encouraged as options for most women. This recommendation is based upon the fact that LARC are safe and highly beneficial when inserted immediately postpartum. LARC use reduces the risk of unplanned pregnancies and improves the health of mothers and newborns by facilitating healthy spacing between pregnancies. In addition, providing LARC to adolescents immediately postpartum, when they are highly motivated to prevent pregnancy and are already in the health care system, decreases the risk of a rapid repeat pregnancy.

Reimbursement is available for LARC use in Maryland.

There has been some confusion as to whether or not hospitals could be reimbursed for the procedure and the cost of a LARC device placed immediately postpartum. The Health Services Cost Review Commission (HSCRC) has confirmed that the LARC device and insertion procedure are reimbursable and are separate from the bundled delivery fee.

In addition, the Maryland Medical Assistance Program will reimburse for all LARC, including those placed immediately postpartum and no preauthorization is required. The list of approved CPT codes for the Medicaid Family Planning Program can be found in the Maryland Medical Assistance OG/GYN/Family Planning Manual available online at: <https://mmcp.dhmh.maryland.gov/Documents/OB%20MANUAL%20March%202012.pdf>

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The Department's Maternal and Child Health staff will be reaching out to the Chair of Obstetrics and Gynecology at your hospital in the next week to help you develop a plan with respect to LARCs. An effective plan should include information about access, type of LARC that is offered, barriers to implementation, and solutions to overcome the barriers.

Our goal is for each hospital to have such a plan in place by December 1, 2014.

Thank you for all the work you do on behalf of women and infants in Maryland. Together we can reduce the rate of unintended pregnancy and improve the health of women and babies in Maryland. If you have any questions, please contact Dr. Laura Herrera at Laura.Herrera@maryland.gov or 410-767-6525.

Sincerely,



Laura Herrera, M.D., M.P.H.
Deputy Secretary for Public Health



Joshua M. Sharfstein, M.D.
Secretary