



State of New Jersey
Department of Human Services
Division of Medical Assistance and Health Services

NEWSLETTER

Volume 5 No. 73

December 1995

TO: Physicians, Certified Nurse Midwives, Certified Nurse Practitioners/Clinical Nurse Specialists, Independent Clinics Health Maintenance Organization (HMO) and Hospitals - Chief Executive Officer

APPLICABLE ONLY TO: Providers of maternity services in Bergen, Hudson, and Passaic Counties

ROUTE TO: Hospital Outpatient Department/Obstetrical Clinical Department

SUBJECT: Maternal Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) Pilot Project

EFFECTIVE: Immediately

PURPOSE: To inform providers of the Division's participation in the Maternal HIV Pilot Project sponsored by the Health Care Financing Administration (HCFA) in collaboration with the United States Public Health Service.

BACKGROUND: Pregnant women infected with HIV are at risk of transmitting the virus to their unborn babies. A recent study by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) demonstrated that when an HIV-infected pregnant woman is treated with the drug AZT and the baby receives AZT after birth, the risk of the infant developing HIV infection is reduced by 67 percent. This treatment program is referred to as the "076 protocol."

Because of the importance of this NIH finding, HCFA is sponsoring an extensive educational campaign about the benefits of HIV testing for pregnant women and the AZT treatment. This campaign, aimed at Medicaid providers and beneficiaries, should enable Medicaid beneficiaries to make better informed choices about HIV testing and treatment.

The campaign is to be piloted in four geographical areas selected by HCFA. They are: the states of Delaware and Rhode Island; Tampa county in Florida; and Bergen, Hudson and Passaic Counties in New Jersey. The pilot phase of the project is anticipated to begin in January 1996 and to last for six months.

To evaluate the impact of this educational campaign, a brief survey of Medicaid providers in the pilot areas will be conducted by the HCFA Region III Office in Philadelphia at the beginning and at the conclusion of the pilot project. The survey will be mailed by the HCFA Region III Office directly to the Medicaid providers.

Educational materials (brochures, posters, flyers, and videotapes, in English and Spanish) developed by the Agency for Health Care Policy and Research (AHCPR) of the United States Public Health Service will be distributed by HCFA directly to Medicaid providers serving pregnant women in the pilot counties.

ACTION: New Jersey Medicaid providers serving pregnant women in Bergen, Hudson, and Passaic Counties are encouraged to cooperate with this project, as follows:

1. Display the AHCPR educational materials in offices, clinics and/or lobbies;
2. Discuss the nature of the HIV infection and the significance of AZT treatment with their patients; (As a reminder, New Jersey State law already requires providers to counsel pregnant women about HIV and the benefits of HIV testing.)
3. Respond, in a timely manner, to the HCFA survey described above; and
4. Contact the Division with requests for additional educational materials, including translations into other languages, as needed.

For any questions or information regarding this Medicaid Alert, including requests for educational materials, please contact Danuta Buzdygan, M.D., Chief Pediatric Consultant, Bureau of Maternal and Child Health, Office of Health Service Administration, Division of Medical Assistance and Health Services, at (609) 588-2718.

**RETAIN THIS MEDICAID ALERT CHRONOLOGICALLY BEHIND THE ALERTS TAB
(GREEN TAB MARKED "4")**