



**To: AmeriHealth Caritas Pennsylvania and AmeriHealth Caritas Northeast  
Primary Care Practitioners in Lancaster County**

**Date: March 4, 2019**

**Subject: Lead Exposure in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania**

The Pennsylvania Department of Human Services (DHS) has brought to our attention that high levels of lead were found in the drinking water of schools in five school districts in Lancaster County (Ephrata Area, Lancaster, Penn Manor, Solanco, and Pequea Valley).

**In response, AmeriHealth Caritas Pennsylvania and AmeriHealth Caritas Northeast would like to remind our network providers to continue to evaluate and conduct regular lead level screening analyses for our members residing in Lancaster County and to further discuss blood lead information with patients.**

#### **Screening requirements**

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) and DHS have stringent requirements for lead toxicity screening for all Medicaid-eligible children.

- All Medicaid-eligible children are considered at risk for lead toxicity and must receive blood lead level screening tests for lead poisoning.
- Primary care practitioners (PCPs) are required (regardless of responses to the lead screening questions) to ensure that children be screened for lead toxicity from 9 months to 18 months old and again from 2 years to 6 years old, and that risk questions be asked at every visit thereafter.

Providers are encouraged to complete a developmental screening for children with elevated lead levels to ensure there are no developmental, growth, or behavioral delays that need to be addressed. Providers may also refer the parents/guardians of children having elevated lead levels to the CONNECT Helpline, which assists families in finding resources and information about child development for children up to age 5. CONNECT can provide parents/guardians with a direct link to their local Early Intervention program or local preschool Early Intervention program. Parents/guardians who have questions about their children's development can reach the CONNECT Helpline at **1-800-692-7288**. More information about CONNECT is available at

<https://www.papromiseforchildren.org/>.

#### **Plan resources**

For our members with elevated blood lead levels, providers can make direct referrals to our Care Management team by calling our **Special Needs Unit** at:

AmeriHealth Caritas Pennsylvania (**1-800-684-5503**) or

AmeriHealth Caritas Northeast (**1-888-498-0766**).

For pregnant members with elevated blood lead levels, providers can make direct referrals to our **Bright Start® maternity program** by calling:

AmeriHealth Caritas Pennsylvania (**1-877-364-6797, option 2**)

AmeriHealth Caritas Northeast (**1-888-208-9528, option 1**)

You can also "let us know" by faxing the Let Us Know referral form to our Care Management team at **1-866-208-**

**8145.** For more information on the Let Us Know program, go to:

[www.amerihealthcaritaspa.com](http://www.amerihealthcaritaspa.com) or [www.amerihealthcaritasnortheast.com](http://www.amerihealthcaritasnortheast.com) → Providers → Initiatives → Let Us Know.

#### **Other resources**

The Pennsylvania Department of Health has a toll-free Lead Information Line **(1-800-440-LEAD [5323])** and provides online materials about lead poisoning and other environmental hazards. You can visit their website at

[PA Dept of Health/Lead Poisoning](http://www.health.pa.gov/topics/disease/Lead%20Poisoning/Pages/Lead%20poisoning.aspx)

([https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/disease/Lead Poisoning/Pages/Lead poisoning.aspx](https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/disease/Lead%20Poisoning/Pages/Lead%20poisoning.aspx)).

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) also has resources at [www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead](http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead).

<sup>1</sup>Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Lead, Prevention Tips, At Risk Populations, Pregnant Women. Last updated December 8, 2015. Available at: [www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/tips/pregnant.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/tips/pregnant.htm).

<sup>2</sup>Kosnett, et al. Recommendations for Medical Management of Adult Lead Exposure. *Environ Health Perspect.* 2007 Mar; 115(3): 463–471. Available at: [www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1849937/](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1849937/).