



Maternal and Child Health Making the Case for Maternal and Child Health Programs

Prenatal Plus Program

Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment

Summary:

In 2002, the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment's Women's Health Unit sponsored a study to determine the cost-savings associated with its Prenatal Plus Program that provides comprehensive services to pregnant Medicaid-eligible women in Colorado. This study, conducted by the Colorado Health Sciences Center, found that for every \$1 spent on the Prenatal Plus Program, Medicaid saved approximately \$2.48 in an infant's first year of life. The findings of the study, published by the Women's Health Unit, were released in the form of an issue brief with corresponding fact and summary sheets and have been used to justify continued funding for the program and collaboration among the partner agencies. A brief overview of both the Prenatal Plus Program and the cost study and links to the resources on the study developed by the Women's Health Unit are included below.

Program Overview:

The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment initiated the Prenatal Plus Program in 1996 with the goal of improving birth outcomes by reducing the prevalence of low birth weight infants among Medicaid-eligible women in Colorado. Prenatal Plus care providers are hired by local clinics to create a community-based program. Half of the funding comes from the Department of Health Care Policies and Finance's (HCPF) Medicaid program and half from Maternal and Child Health Block grant and local agencies. The Medicaid-overseen program provides case management, mental health, smoking cessation, nutrition, and social services to high-risk pregnant women. These services complement traditional prenatal care by addressing the lifestyle, behavioral, and other non-medical aspects of a woman's life to increase her self-sufficiency, assist in developing and maintaining healthy lifestyles during pregnancy, and ultimately reduce the incidence of low weight births in Colorado.

In 2005, 2,354 women received Prenatal Plus services. Women who completed the program through delivery had an average low birth weight rate of 12.6% compared to an estimated 13.8% among women receiving no intervention services. Similar findings have been demonstrated each year of the 12 since the program was first implemented.

Cost Effectiveness Study Overview

In 2002, the Women's Health Unit contracted with the University of Colorado Health Sciences Center to conduct an independent cost-effectiveness analysis. The analysis used Medicaid claims data for infants born in the fiscal years 1998 through 2000 that were matched to birth certificates. The study identified women participating fully in the Prenatal Plus Program (10 visits) and those receiving partial program packages and compared them to women who were eligible for the program but not enrolled. The

Women's Health Unit and Medicaid jointly agreed to sponsor the study to assist Medicaid in providing a justification for a rate increase for Prenatal Plus providers.

Data: Medicaid claims data and birth certificates for fiscal year 1998-2000

Measures/Outcomes of Interest: Return on investment, internal rate of return

Findings (all dollar figures set to fiscal year 2001-2002 value):

The analysis found that the Prenatal Plus Program reduced overall Medicaid costs in Colorado and that for every \$1 spent on Prenatal Plus services, Medicaid saved \$2.48 during an infant's first year of life. Total Medicaid expenditures for women and their infants participating in the Prenatal Plus program (i.e. costs of the program and Medicaid reimbursement for participants' medical costs) over the three years covered by the study was approximately \$21.4 million. Medicaid expenditures for comparable women not enrolled in the program totaled approximately \$27.3 million – a difference of almost \$6 million. Medicaid payments for women and their babies enrolled in Prenatal Plus averaged \$1,138 less per birth than eligible women and their infants not enrolled in the program (\$4,088 versus \$5,226).

Audience for Findings: The final study was developed into an issue brief with corresponding fact and summary sheets and shared with the Department of Public Health, the Department of Health Care Policies and Finance (Medicaid), the Governor's office, legislators, and other stakeholders. The information is available on the Web page, including an overview of the program, a summary of services, program eligibility, providers, program results, funding, the annual report and cost study analysis (full report and highlights). The site also offers information and resources for providers. The Web page is available at:

<http://www.colorado.gov/cs/Satellite?c=Page&childpagename=HCPF%2FHCPFLayout&cid=1251594936298&pagename=HCPFWrapper>.

Impact of Findings: As a result of the study, Medicaid received a rate increase for the program, though the increase was not large enough to affect the program's budget neutrality.

References and Resources

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Glazner JE, Beaty BL. The Effects of the Prenatal Plus Program on Infant Birth Weight and Medicaid Costs. Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment. December 2002. (<http://www.cdphe.state.co.us/pp/womens/pdf/CostStudyWeb.pdf>)

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Investing in our Future: Cost Savings of the Prenatal Plus Program. Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment. 2002. (<http://www.cdphe.state.co.us/pp/womens/pdf/Highlights.pdf>)

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