Pregnancy-Related Medi-Cal: Update to Services

Maternal and Child Health Access (MCHA) works to improve the health of low-income women and families through advocacy, education, training, and direct services. According to MCHA, the state has for years described the scope of coverage available under Pregnancy-Related Medi-Cal as “limited” or “restricted”. However, the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) has recently reminded state Medicaid programs that the scope of coverage is instead “necessarily comprehensive” because the health of the pregnant woman is intertwined with the health of the expected child. The state is currently updating the Medi-Cal Provider Manual, Aid Code descriptions, and the Automated Eligibility Verification System (AEVS) messaging to explain that Pregnancy-Related Medi-Cal provides comprehensive services.

Note to providers: When billing for services other than a regular prenatal care visit or labor and delivery services, providers will have to include a pregnancy diagnosis and procedure code. (Source: Maternal and Child Health Access. Recent Developments in Coverage for Pregnant Women, October 3rd, 2016.)


Nutrition News: The Better-For-You Boom

At the 2016 Food and Nutrition Conference and Expo (a gathering of academics, nutrition professionals, culinary enthusiasts), visitors were introduced to a few exciting, hot-off-the-press food concepts. Many will be hitting the shelves soon, if they haven’t already. Products of note include:

- Blended Burger - a meat burger that contains diced mushrooms as a replacement for some of the meat
- Veggie Pasta - traditional Italian pasta renditions re-imagined from chickpeas, green lentils, edamame, and even black beans
- Vegetable Chips - the familiar crunchy snack, made from slices of produce such as beets and Brussel sprouts (seen on the right)

While at face value these items may appear unrelated, each has a fascinating similarity
to the next. A handful of companies have begun to re-formulate common foods from more nutritious ingredients shifting them into nutrient-packed alternatives.

According to the 2010 State of the Plate Report, most Americans realize that eating fruits and vegetables is important to a healthy diet, yet under-consumption continues to be a problem. In 2013, the CDC confirmed that 76% of adults in the US did not eat enough fruit, while a whopping 87% did not eat enough veggies. This is important when considering that a healthy diet with sufficient fruit and vegetable intake is fundamental in preventing health disorders such as type 2 diabetes, heart disease, stroke, and some cancers. Fruits and veggies are also famous for helping manage weight, especially when consumed in place of higher calorie, lower nutrient foods. As the evidence demonstrates, there is a clear gap between what we know is good for us - and what we actually eat (or in this case, what we don’t eat). By re-formulating processed foods to contain fruits and veggies in place of other less nutritious ingredients, food companies are making it easier to consistently reach daily fruit and vegetable recommendations. If this trend really catches on, it may even have the potential to improve the composition of our diets, and in result, even our health.

Some parting food for thought: it is safe to say that we do not want to solely get our veggies from burgers, pasta, chips, or any re-imagined processed food. Diets rich in minimally processed fruits, vegetables, whole grains and more, will always offer a superior bill of health than a diet packed with processed alternatives. While it may be true that re-formulating dietary staples cannot single-handedly eliminate the risk for preventable health disorders, it certainly is a step in the right direction. Be sure to keep your finger on the pulse of this trend at your local grocery store!

Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI) Training

On December 2, 2016, the Public Health Disease Control Program led a training and overview directed at healthcare providers and staff providing primary care, STD care and urgent care. The focus was on the practical aspects of syphilis, sexually transmitted infections and HIV preventative care, with particular attention to common clinical scenarios that arise in our community.

To review information covered during the training, please visit the local Epidemiology webpage for local and State STI trends: [http://cosb.countyofsb.org/phd/epi.aspx?id=40517](http://cosb.countyofsb.org/phd/epi.aspx?id=40517) or the Disease Control & Prevention webpage: [http://cosb.countyofsb.org/phd/dcp/](http://cosb.countyofsb.org/phd/dcp/)

Updated information regarding HIV reporting and Patient Services: [http://cosb.countyofsb.org/phd/hiv/](http://cosb.countyofsb.org/phd/hiv/)

Epidemiology Program Updates

- 2016 Third Quarter Reportable Communicable Diseases Counts for the County: [http://cosb.countyofsb.org/uploadedFiles/phd/EPI/2016%20CD%203rd%20QT.pdf](http://cosb.countyofsb.org/uploadedFiles/phd/EPI/2016%20CD%203rd%20QT.pdf)
  - Leading Causes of Death in Santa Barbara County 2015 by Gender
  - 2016-2017 Seasonal Influenza Report