

New case management program to identify PTSD in parents of infants in the NICU

We are launching a new case management (CM) program for screening of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in parents of infants hospitalized in the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU). This CM program will support Anthem HealthKeepers Plus mothers and families at risk for PTSD due to the stressful experience of having a baby in NICU.

What is the purpose of this program?

The NICU PTSD program seeks to improve outcomes for families of babies who are in the NICU by screening and facilitating referral to treatment for PTSD in parents.

How will it work?

Case managers will reach out by phone to parents of babies who have been in the NICU for 30 days or more. They will screen and facilitate referral to treatment for PTSD.

What is PTSD?

PTSD is an anxiety disorder that may develop after exposure to a terrifying event or ordeal. However, people who have seen another person experience a life-threatening event can also suffer from PTSD.

- PTSD is diagnosed when the stress symptoms persist for more than a month.
- Symptoms of PTSD include intrusive memories (like flashbacks and upsetting dreams), attempts to avoid thinking or talking about the event and hyperarousal, such as irritability or anger.
- Onset of symptoms of PTSD may be delayed for even a year after the initiating event.

Why screen for PTSD in parents of long-term NICU patients?

- One in 10 infants in the U.S. are admitted to a NICU.
- Incidence of parental NICU-related PTSD varies from 20 to 41%.
- PTSD is treatable if identified.
- Lack of treatment can affect the health of the parent and the child.
- Children cared for by mothers with PTSD are at significantly higher risk for psychological aggression, child abuse and neglect.
- Parental-PTSD can have long-term adverse impacts on children, such as lower cognitive performance and conduct disorders.

If you would like more information on the new case management program for PTSD in the NICU, please call Provider Services at **1-800-901-0020**.

The information in this bulletin may be an update or change to your provider manual. Find the most current manual at:

<https://mediproviders.anthem.com/va>

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