

January 2019

Neonatal intensive care unit post-traumatic stress disorder program

On February 1, 2019, Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield is launching a 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 mothers and families at risk for PTSD due to the stressful experience of having a baby in the 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 for treatment of PTSD.

What is PTSD?

PTSD is an anxiety disorder that may develop after exposure to a terrifying event or ordeal. However, people who see 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 (e.g., flashbacks and upsetting dreams), attempts to avoid thinking or talking about the event, and hyperarousal (e.g., 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?

- Admittance of infants to a NICU in the United States is one in 10.
- Incidence of parental NICU-related PTSD varies from 20% to 41%.
- Treatment of PTSD is possible if identified.
- Lack of treatment can affect the health of the parent and the child.
- Risk for children cared for by mothers with PTSD is significantly higher for psychological aggression, child abuse and neglect.
- Impacts on children with parents having PTSD can be adverse and long-term (such as lower cognitive performance and conduct disorders).

What if I need assistance?

If you have questions about this communication or need assistance with any other item, contact your local Provider Relations representative or call Provider Services at **1-855-558-1443**.

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