Medicaid’s Role in Preventing Unplanned Pregnancies: LARCs and Filling Care Gaps

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Funding: NIHCM, NIH NICHD R03 (HD099428), Harvard Chan School
Pregnancy Timing and Intention

- High rate of unintended pregnancy in the U.S. (~45%)
  - Highest among adolescents, racial-ethnic minorities, and lower income populations
- Unintended pregnancies associated with adverse maternal and newborn health outcomes (e.g. preterm birth), and also with educational attainment and earnings
Most Postpartum Pregnancies are Unintended

The Critical Postpartum Window

• “Short-interval pregnancies” associated with a range of adverse maternal and newborn outcomes

• ACOG guidelines recommend avoiding interpregnancy intervals shorter than 6 months (WHO recommends 2 years)

• Ensuring postpartum people have access to freely choose among the full range of contraceptive methods is key to preventing unintended, short-interval pregnancy

Postpartum Cliffs—Missed Opportunities to Promote Maternal Health in the United States

Jessica L. Cohen, PhD; Jamie R. Daw, PhD

JAMA Health Forum

Potential Opportunity of Immediate Postpartum Contraception

• Strong connection to health care provider/system that develops in pregnancy and delivery often fades (or plummets) postpartum

• Many receive no postpartum visit at all

• Contraceptive options available during delivery admission ("immediate postpartum contraception") offer tremendous opportunity for unintended pregnancy prevention for those who may lose access to affordable, high-quality care
Few Options for Immediate Postpartum Contraception

- Until ~ 10 years ago, only options for immediate postpartum contraception were tubal ligation, progestin-only pills, or injectables
  - Permanent method or short-acting only
  - Not IUD + implants (“long-acting reversible contraception”)—most effective forms of reversible contraception (lasting 3-10 years)
Medicaid Unbundling of Immediate Postpartum LARC Payment

- Until ~10 years ago, immediate postpartum LARCs not offered:
  - The device and procedure are costly BUT
  - Would only be covered as part of the “global” fee for childbirth
- Momentum from clinicians, policy experts, and women’s health advocates grew to “unbundle” the reimbursement for immediate postpartum LARC from this global payment
LARC Reimbursement as a Policy Strategy

- South Carolina Medicaid was the first to adopt this policy (2012)
- Majority of states have adopted some form of the policy since

South Carolina Birth Outcomes Initiative

South Carolina Birth Outcomes Initiative is an effort by the South Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (SCDHHS) and its partners to improve the health of newborns in the Medicaid program. Launched in July 2011.

Read More
Payment for IPP-LARC Increases Use: South Carolina

Association Between South Carolina Medicaid’s Change in Payment for Immediate Postpartum Long-Acting Reversible Contraception and Birth Intervals

Maria W. Steenland, SD, MPH¹, Lydia E. Pace, MD, MPH²; Anna D. Sinaiko, PhD³; Jessica L. Cohen, PhD⁴

Payment for IPP-LARC Increases Use in Five Other Early-Adopting States

Immediate Postpartum Long-Acting Reversible Contraceptive Use Following State-Specific Changes in Hospital Medicaid Reimbursement

Maria W. Steenland, MD; Raj Vatsa, BA; Lydia E. Pace, MD, MPH; Jessica L. Cohen, PhD

Across All States, Only a Handful of Facilities Offer IPP-LARC
Characteristics of Facilities Adopting IPP-LARC

- Adopting facilities overwhelmingly likely to be urban, non-Catholic, high-level teaching hospitals
Some Evidence of “Spillovers” to Commercially-Paid Births
1. **Method switching**: Sizable decline in tubal ligation for adult women. Use of any form of effective contraception only increased significantly for adolescents.

2. **Reductions in “Short-Interval Births”** among adolescents
   - Among adults: No change overall, but significant increase in birth spacing for non-Hispanic Black adults

3. **Reductions in Preterm births and Low Birthweight Births**


Steenland, Pace, Sinaiko, Cohen. Association between South Carolina Medicaid’s Change in Payment for Immediate Postpartum Long-Acting Reversible Contraception and Birth Intervals. *JAMA*, 2019. 322(1).
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Policy Led to a Reduction in Short-Interval Births among Adolescents in South Carolina

Payment for IPP-LARC in South Carolina: Contraception, Birth Spacing and Birth Outcomes

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Policy Led to Reductions in Adverse Birth Outcomes in South Carolina

DID Coefficients

- Preterm birth (3.7)
- Low birthweight birth (3.1)
- Moderate preterm birth (1.4)
- Very birthweight birth (0.5)

Pre-policy mean in parentheses

Association of Medicaid Reimbursement for Immediate Postpartum Long-acting Reversible Contraception With Infant Birth Outcomes

JAMA Pediatrics | Original Investigation

Maria W. Steenland, SD; Lydia E. Pace, MD, MPH; Jessica L. Cohen, PhD
Summary

• State Medicaid policies to unbundle immediate postpartum LARC reimbursement from global fee have increased use of this method across a range of states

• Adoption across facilities very uneven, meaning that access to this method is not uniform for birthing people

• Some evidence of declines in short-interval births and adverse birth outcomes, but not for all groups

• Policy is meant to increase patient choice: Evidence is needed whether patients are receiving patient-centered, complete, unbiased counseling regarding IPP-LARC

• More information needed on modifiable factors influencing adoption of IPP-LARC provision at facilities
Thank you!

Please reach out with your feedback and suggestions!
Email: cohenj@hsph.harvard.edu

All views my own, but collaborators on this work:
Maria Steenland, Lydia Pace, Anna Sinaiko, Raj Vatsa
Appendix Slides
### Interrupted Time Series Estimates: Medicaid-Paid Deliveries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pre-policy trend</strong></td>
<td>-0.01 (-0.03, 0.01)</td>
<td>0.08 (0.05, 0.11)***</td>
<td>0.06 (0.05, 0.07)***</td>
<td>0.00 (0.00, 0.01)</td>
<td>0.03 (-0.01, 0.07)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Level change upon policy onset</strong></td>
<td>-0.14 (-0.47, 0.19)</td>
<td>-0.28 (-0.62, 0.07)</td>
<td>-0.17 (-0.48, 0.14)</td>
<td>-0.06 (-0.19, 0.08)</td>
<td>0.13 (-0.79, 1.04)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Post-policy trend change</strong></td>
<td>0.14 (0.11, 0.18)***</td>
<td>0.05 (0.00, 0.11) *</td>
<td>0.05 (0.01, 0.08) **</td>
<td>0.17 (0.15, 0.18)***</td>
<td>0.82 (0.73, 0.91)***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Net policy impact</strong></td>
<td>1.88 (1.36, 2.39)***</td>
<td>0.48 (-0.39, 1.34)</td>
<td>0.38 (0.09, 0.67) *</td>
<td>2.27 (2.09, 2.44)***</td>
<td>9.15 (8.36, 9.94)***</td>
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* $p < 0.05$  
** $p < 0.01$  
*** $p < 0.001$
## Interrupted Time Series Estimates: Commercially-Paid Deliveries

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<td><strong>Pre-policy trend</strong></td>
<td>0.00 (0.00, 0.00) *</td>
<td>0.02 (0.01, 0.03) ***</td>
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<td><strong>Level change upon policy onset</strong></td>
<td>-0.02 (-0.04, 0.01)</td>
<td>0.03 (-0.09, 0.15)</td>
<td>-0.15 (-0.24, -0.06) ***</td>
<td>0.01 (-0.01, 0.03)</td>
<td>-0.19 (-0.35, -0.02) *</td>
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<td><strong>Post-policy trend change</strong></td>
<td>0.02 (0.01, 0.02) ***</td>
<td>0.00 (-0.02, 0.01)</td>
<td>0.03 (0.02, 0.04) ***</td>
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<td><strong>Net policy impact</strong></td>
<td>0.20 (0.17, 0.23) ***</td>
<td>-0.01 (-0.30, 0.28)</td>
<td>0.19 (0.06, 0.33) **</td>
<td>0.38 (0.34, 0.42) ***</td>
<td>0.82 (0.54, 1.10) ***</td>
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* p < 0.05  ** p < 0.01  *** p < 0.001