



Frederick P. Cerise, M.D., M.P.H.
Secretary

NEWS RELEASE

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Louisiana Gets Federal Approval to Provide Family Planning Services

Baton Rouge – The Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals has received approval from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services to provide family planning services for some low and moderate-income women who are not already covered by the state’s Medicaid program.

Louisiana is one of 18 states to receive approval for this Family Planning Demonstration Waiver. The program, titled TAKE CHARGE, is approved for a five-year period.

Statistics from Louisiana’s Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System show 55 percent of all pregnancies to Louisiana mothers are unintended. According to Dr. Fred Cerise, DHH Secretary, a key goal of the program is to reduce unintended pregnancies.

“This program is important to the state because it is less costly to provide coverage for contraceptive services than to pay for the costs associated with unintended pregnancy,” Cerise explained. “Women will now have access to the tools necessary for making critical decisions regarding their families.”

Cerise added that TAKE CHARGE is also an important piece of the department’s plan to reduce infant mortality.

“A key risk factor for infant deaths is closely spaced births,” he said. “Access to family planning services through this program will greatly increase availability of contraception to low income women, which will be a health and social benefit to them.”

This family planning program will cover initial and annual medical examinations, laboratory tests and contraceptives, as well as other family planning services.

TAKE CHARGE expands access to family planning services. Uninsured women between the ages of 19 and 44 who are otherwise not eligible for Medicaid, LaCHIP and Medicare and who do not have private insurance coverage can participate in the program waiver. Family income for these women cannot exceed 200 percent of the Federal Poverty Level.

Everyone enrolled in TAKE CHARGE will receive a special pink eligibility card that they must present to their health care provider.

To inform citizens about the new program, DHH will begin distributing applications and conducting public outreach efforts in November. Once approved, coverage through TAKE CHARGE remains in place for 12 months (in most cases).

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