

ISSUE DATE June 6, 2022	EFFECTIVE DATE June 6, 2022	NUMBER 01-22-13, 08-22-14, 09-22-12, 31-22-13, 33-22-11, 55-22-01
SUBJECT Updates to Blood Lead Reference Value and Environmental Lead Investigation (ELI) Provider Qualifications Requirements	BY  Sally A. Kozak, Deputy Secretary Office of Medical Assistance Programs	

IMPORTANT REMINDER: All providers must revalidate the Medical Assistance (MA) enrollment of each service location every 5 years. Providers should log into PROMISe™ to check the revalidation dates of each service location and submit revalidation applications at least 60 days prior to the revalidation dates. Enrollment (revalidation) applications may be found at:
http://www.dhs.pa.gov/provider/promise/enrollmentinformation/S_001994.

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this bulletin is to inform providers enrolled in the Medical Assistance (MA) Program that the Department of Human Services (Department) updated the Blood Lead Reference Value to 3.5 micrograms per deciliter (µg/dL) and the qualifications for an Environmental Lead Investigation (ELI) provider to enroll in the MA Program.

SCOPE:

This bulletin applies to physicians, Certified Registered Nurse Practitioners, certified nurse midwives, outpatient hospitals and independent medical surgical clinics who provide blood lead testing to MA beneficiaries under 21 years of age in the Fee-for-Service and managed care delivery systems. This bulletin also applies to ELI providers that enroll in the MA Program. Providers rendering services in the managed care delivery system should address any payment related questions related to ELI to the appropriate MA managed care organization (MCO).

BACKGROUND:

Universal blood lead toxicity testing, by 12 months and at 24 months of age, is a required component of the Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic and Treatment benefit. Providers are also required to test children between the ages of 36 and 72 months of age if they have not been previously tested for lead poisoning. Providers may test for blood lead using a capillary sample but must confirm an Elevated Blood Lead Level (EBLL) with a venous blood sample. Additionally, the MA Program provides coverage for blood lead testing of all MA

COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS BULLETIN SHOULD BE DIRECTED TO:

The appropriate toll free number for your provider type.

Visit the Office of Medical Assistance Programs Web site at:

<https://www.dhs.pa.gov/providers/Providers/Pages/Health%20Care%20for%20Providers/OMAP-Information.aspx>.

enrolled children under 21 years of age at any time, if indicated by risk assessment, or for those children with a history or symptoms of lead exposure.

While there is no safe lead level in children, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) uses a Blood Lead Reference Value to determine when follow-up actions should be taken. For information on CDC guidance, see the Recommended Actions Based on Blood Lead Level at: <https://www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/advisory/acclpp/actions-blls.htm>.

On August 22, 2018, the MA Program issued MA Bulletin 01-18-10, "Environmental Lead Investigations", which required that ELI providers contract with a nurse or sanitarian who possessed a certification as a lead risk assessor. The Department is removing the requirement for ELI providers to contract with a nurse or sanitarian in order to align with the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry regulations, which set forth the requirements for lead risk inspectors, referred to in the regulations as Inspector-risk assessors. For additional information, see 34 Pa. Code §§ 203.1, 203.4.

DISCUSSION:

The CDC announced on October 28, 2021, that the Blood Lead Reference Value for children was being updated from 5 µg/dL to 3.5 µg/dL. More information about the updated Blood Lead Reference Value can be found at the CDC's Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report at: <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/70/wr/pdfs/mm7043a4-H.pdf>.

To align with the CDC's guidelines, a provider is to manage the condition of a child who is found to have an EBLL that is greater than or equal to 3.5 µg/dL. Management should include follow-up blood tests and consideration of possible sources of contamination including housing, food, and toys. Locating the source of lead contamination is an integral part of the management and treatment of lead toxicity. To determine if the source of lead is in the beneficiary's home, the Department will pay for an ELI for an MA beneficiary under 21 years of age with a blood lead level of at least 3.5 µg/dL. The Department will only pay for ELIs completed by enrolled ELI providers.

To align with current Department of Labor and Industry standards, and to increase access to qualified risk assessors, enrolled ELI providers are no longer required to contract with a nurse or sanitarian who obtained certification as an Inspector-risk assessor. To qualify for enrollment in the MA Program, an ELI provider must possess, or employ an individual who possesses, a current certification from the Department of Labor and Industry as an Inspector-risk assessor.

PROCEDURE:

In accordance with guidance from the CDC, MA providers are to manage the condition of a child who is found to have a blood lead level that is greater than or equal to 3.5 µg/dL. Once an MA provider confirms the diagnosis of a blood lead level of at least 3.5 µg/dL with a venous blood sample, he or she shall submit a referral to an enrolled ELI provider for an environmental lead investigation for an MA beneficiary under 21 years of age with a Blood

Lead Reference Value of at least 3.5 µg/dL. For a child who is found to have a Blood Lead Reference Value less than 3.5 µg/dL, a provider should perform follow-up blood lead monitoring.

ELI providers may enroll in the MA Program as provider type 55 (Vendor), specialty 225 (Environmental Investigation). Information on how to complete and submit an enrollment application is available on the Department's website at: http://www.dhs.pa.gov/provider/promise/enrollmentinformation/S_001994. ELI providers may enroll online and submit required supporting documentation by uploading them directly to the secure online portal. Providers may also download a paper application and submit it with the required supporting documentation by mail, e-mail, or fax using the instructions in the application. As part of the enrollment process, all providers will undergo the required screening activities prior to enrollment in the MA Program.

SUPERSEDED BULLETIN:

This bulletin supersedes MA Bulletin 01-18-10, "Environmental Lead Investigations," issued August 22, 2018, with respect to qualifications to be enrolled as an ELI provider and the Blood Lead Reference Value levels.