

Lead screening

UnitedHealthcare Community Plan of Pennsylvania

Pennsylvania requires all Medicaid-eligible children to be screened for lead. Protecting children from exposure to lead is important to a child's overall health and well-being. There is no safe level of lead in the blood of a child. Even low levels of lead, 3.5 micrograms per deciliter (mcg/dL) or lower, have been associated with developmental disabilities and attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).



Requirements

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) and the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services (DHS) have strict requirements for lead testing for all Medicaid-eligible children.

- Primary care providers (PCPs) are required to ensure children are tested for lead toxicity at age 9 months, and again on or before the child's second birthday
- Children of any age who are new to Medicaid must have a lead toxicity test

One of the main sources of lead poisoning can be dust from lead-based paint that was used until 1978. Lead is found in many older homes and remodeled homes. Another source of lead is from old lead pipes that supply water to homes.¹

Children younger than 2 are susceptible to lead exposure because of normal everyday activities, like crawling on the floor and putting hands, toys or other objects in their mouth. Children who are anemic also absorb lead more rapidly and can have an elevated blood lead level.¹

Community resources

CONNECT Helpline:
800-692-7288

Offers resources and information about child development for children from birth to age 5

PA Safe and Healthy Homes (SHHP):
717-772-2762

Provides education and intervention to promote healthy homes and prevent problems and injuries

Poison Control Center:
800-222-1222

Tells callers what to do if they swallow, splash or get stung by something that may be harmful



Screening and prevention tips

- A completed lead risk questionnaire does not fulfill the requirement of a blood lead level screening for children
- Many Pennsylvania counties have a higher-than-average number of homes built before 1978, thus making our members high-risk
- All children enrolled in Medicaid are considered high-risk for lead poisoning
- The time that a child spends in a secondary home (e.g., a grandparent’s home, daycare) needs to be considered



Guidance for testing limits

- 3.5 mcg/dL indicates an elevated blood lead level (EBLL)
- All capillary (finger/heel stick) test results of 3.5 mcg/dL and higher must be confirmed by a venous draw
- Any confirmed level of lead in the blood shows the child has been exposed



Steps for elevated results

If a child has a lead level of 3.5 mcg/dL or higher, you should:

- 1. Notify** the DHS CONNECT Helpline at 800-692-7288
- 2. Refer** the child for environmental lead investigation

UnitedHealthcare Community Plan works with Accredited Environmental Technologies (AET) to conduct environmental lead investigations.

You can contact AET directly at 800-969-6238, 8 a.m.–4 p.m. ET, Monday–Friday, or online at UHCprovider.com/PACommunityplan > Bulletins and Newsletters > Current News, Bulletins and Alerts > AET Lead Screening Referral Form.

With any EBLL, siblings should also be tested, even with previous non-elevated results.



Filing lead screening claims

Screening service claims should be submitted using the appropriate CPT® codes. For more details, please view the [PATH reference guide](#):

Service	CPT code	Modifier
Lead screening questionnaire	83655	52 and a \$0 charge
Blood lead level (done in office)	83655	N/A
Blood lead level (done at lab)	83655	90 and a \$0 charge



Resources

• UHCprovider.com/PAcommunityplan

Extra support for our members

Please refer UnitedHealthcare Community Plan members with elevated lead levels to our Enhanced Member Support Unit (EMSU) formerly our Special Needs Unit. The primary purpose of the EMSU is to help ensure that each member with special health care needs and/or health-related social needs receives access to appropriate primary care, specialists and supportive services providers who are trained and skilled in the member's needs. You can reach our EMSU at 877-844-8844, 8 a.m.–5 p.m. ET, Monday–Friday.

¹Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). 2022. Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention: Sources of Lead Exposure. cdc.gov/nceh/lead/prevention/sources.htm.

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