

Alaska Public Health Advisory

November 7, 2018

Updated Recommendations for Palivizumab Prophylaxis due to Early Onset of Respiratory Syncytial Virus Activity in Alaska

In September, after a review of Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) seasonality data in past years, a statewide RSV Workgroup of health care providers and public health officials recommended administration of palivizumab (Synagis®) to qualifying infants and children during November 28, 2018 through May 22, 2019, to provide the best coverage for RSV prevention in Alaska.¹

The Workgroup is currently aware of at least 20 laboratory-confirmed cases of RSV since mid-October from multiple regions of the State (with highest case counts occurring in Fairbanks), including at least 10 RSV hospitalizations involving residents from Fairbanks and Anchorage.

Due to these reports of elevated RSV activity in several Alaska regions, the Workgroup voted unanimously to start palivizumab prophylaxis now rather than waiting until November 28.¹

Summary Recommendations

- Providers may administer palivizumab to eligible infants and children starting 11/6/2018.
- The posted criteria and prior authorization forms on the AK Medicaid Prior Authorization page have been updated to reflect the new start date. The updated forms will be available online later today.²
- The Alaska Medicaid Clinical Call Center is currently prepared to start accepting prior authorization submissions based on the new start date.
- If you have questions about Medicaid authorization, contact Chuck Semling, PharmD, RPh (907-334-2458) or Erin Narus, PharmD, RPh (907-334-2425).
- The RSV season offset will also be monitored and adjustments to the season end date will be based on the number and percent of positive tests. The maximum number of palivizumab doses covered by Alaska Medicaid during the RSV season is 5 monthly doses.

References

1. Alaska Section of Epidemiology *Bulletin*. "Palivizumab Prophylaxis – Alaska, 2018-19 RSV Season". No. 15, September 20, 2018. Available at: http://www.epi.alaska.gov/bulletins/docs/b2018_15.pdf
2. Alaska Medicaid Synagis Criteria, 2018–19, Version 2. Available at: <http://dhss.alaska.gov/dhcs/Pages/pharmacy/medpriorauthoriz.aspx#biologics>