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To: Local MCAH Programs
Re: Data Methods – Transition to using Obstetric Estimate (OE) for indicators in the LHJ databooks

**What**

Beginning with the 2014 data year, the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) will use the obstetric estimate (OE) of gestation at delivery for estimating the gestational age of a newborn. OE is defined as ''the best estimate of the infant's gestation in completed weeks based on the birth attendant's final estimate of gestation." This replaces the measure based on the date of the last menstrual period (LMP). The CA MCAH program and FHOP have now also made this transition.

**Why**

This transition is being made because of increasing evidence of the greater validity of the OE compared with the LMP-based measure.

**Implications**

Based on the NCHS study to compare the use of LMP vs. OE using birth certificate data from 2007 to 2013 for all 50 states, results indicate that:

- Births were less likely to be classified as preterm using the OE (9.62%) than with the LMP (11.39%). The 2013 OE preterm rate was lower than the LMP rate for 49 states and the District of Columbia.
- The OE-based percentage of full-term deliveries was higher than the LMP-based percentage; levels of late-term and postterm deliveries were lower.
- Preterm birth rates declined for both measures from 2007 through 2013 (8% compared with 10%).
- The OE-based 2013 preterm infant mortality rate was 19% higher than the LMP rate.

For local MCAH programs, this change will affect the following indicators and corresponding Databooks:

| CHSR Indicator # | Databook | Indicator Definition |
|---|---|---|
| 1D (Related Indicators) | PNC | Adequate prenatal care (80% Kotelchuck index) per 100 females delivering a live birth |
| 1D (Related Indicators) | PNC | Inadequate prenatal care per 100 females delivering a live birth |
| 2A | IPI | Births within 24 months of a previous birth per 100 females age 15 to 44 delivering a live birth |
| 2C | CSEC | Cesarean births per 100 low risk females delivering a live birth |
| 3A | DTHI | Fetal and infant deaths during perinatal period per 1,000 live births and fetal deaths |
| 3C | GEST | Births less than 37 weeks gestation per 100 live births |
| 5C | IPI | Births within 24 months of a previous birth per 100 females age less than 20 delivering a live birth |

For these Databooks, there will only be seven years of data instead of the usual 12 years of data. You may notice changes in rates as a result of the switch from LMP to OE for these indicators compared to FHOPs previously published Databooks.