



Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals
Health Plan Advisory 16-1
January 13, 2016

Medicaid Coverage for Freestanding Birthing Centers:

Effective Nov. 20, 2015, Medicaid began coverage for vaginal delivery services for Medicaid recipients at free standing birthing centers (FSBCs). It is the Department's expectation that all Health Plans will provide coverage of vaginal delivery services at free standing birthing centers.

Birth Centers are facilities for the primary purpose of performing low-risk deliveries, but are not a hospital or licensed as part of a hospital. "Low-risk pregnancy" means a normal, uncomplicated prenatal course as determined by documentation of adequate prenatal care and the anticipation of a normal, uncomplicated labor and birth, as defined by reasonable and generally accepted criteria adopted by professional groups for maternal, fetal, and neonatal health care. Neither general nor epidural anesthesia shall be provided in the birthing center.

A Birthing Center must meet the following criteria:

- Center must be Commission for the Accreditation of Birth Centers (CABC) accredited.
- Center shall be located within a ground travel time distance from the general acute care hospital with which the center maintains a contractual relationship, including a transfer agreement, that allows for an emergency cesarean delivery to be started within 30 minutes of the decision a cesarean delivery is necessary.

All freestanding birthing center applications are subject to review and approval of the Health Plan Medical Director.

Birthing Center Reimbursement:

Each birthing center has an established minimum specific fee for reimbursement listed on under the [fee schedule](#) link on the LaMedicaid website. In the event that a patient has to be transferred prior to delivery, the facility may still bill and be reimbursed for not less than 50 percent of the established facility fee to the birthing center.

Professional Providers:

Physicians, certified nurse midwives, and licensed midwives are able to provide for delivery services in the setting of the free standing birthing center. Licensed midwives have been added as a State Plan service and minimum reimbursement rates can be found on the Medicaid fee schedule.