

Texas CHIP Coalition Minutes
Friday, May 18, 2005, 11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
Thompson Auditorium, 1st Floor
Texas Medical Association

Bryan Sperry called the meeting to order at 11:00 a.m.

Attendees: Kathleen Hamilton; Bryan Sperry, Children's Hospital Association of Texas; Susan Terese, insure.a.kid; Anita McNew, Catholic Charities Diocese of Ft. Worth; Criselda Flores, Catholic Charities Diocese of Ft. Worth; Sr. Helen Brewer, Seton Healthcare Network; Anne Dunkelberg, Center for Public Policy Priorities; Patti Everitt, Children's Defense Fund; Cecilia Cruz MacKay, Texas Speech-Language-Hearing Association; Stella Rodriguez, Texas Association of Community Action Agencies; Lynn Hudson; Therese Ruffing, Atty & Consultant; Beth Schlechter, Indigent Care Collaboration ; Darlene Hicks, Texas League of Women Voters; Melody Chatelle, Chatelle & Associates; Terri Couch, Texas Community Solutions, Inc.; Ileana Hinojosa, Texans Care for Children; Sonia Lara, Texas Association of Community Health Centers; Anita Mitchell, Texas Association of Community Health Centers

HHSC Update

Mental health benefits will *likely* be fully restored to pre-2003 levels (*see attachment for listing of mental health benefits prior to September 2003 and changes that became effective September 1, 2003*). The budget conference committee added \$3.3 million for restoration of mental health benefits and redirected \$12.4 million **from** restoration of the 2.5% cut in provider rates **to** utilization *and* enrollment. Vision and hospice care will be restored on September 1, 2005. The RFP for dental services is due on June 15 and the contract will be awarded on September 1. Dental benefits are expected to become available December 1, 2005 and each tier will offer preventive and therapeutic services. Families will be assigned to one of three tier groups based on several criteria. New enrollees will be assigned to Tier I, enrollees who are deemed from Medicaid will be assigned to Tier II and families who renew in a timely manner will receive enhanced benefits in Tier III. The maximum **annual** benefit for 6-month dental coverage under Tier I is \$375, Tier II is \$475 and Tier III is \$575. Each tier will have a preventive care benefit in the amount of \$175 and the therapeutic benefit will vary as follows: Tier I \$200, Tier II \$300 and Tier III \$400. Families may use their annual dental benefit in the first 6 months of coverage. The policy on timely renewals for enhanced dental benefits has not been finalized; however, it will be the enrollment broker's primary responsibility to explain the benefit structure to families, with the assistance of the coalition, Community Based Organizations (CBOs) and other advocacy groups.

The state will use its contract with Sherry Matthew's Advocacy Marketing, which expires August 31 to place radio spots of Cmmr. Sanchez and Dr. Hellerstadt's brief child health report to publicize the benefit changes to CHIP. The state will also be developing fliers for the state communication staff to distribute at community events and health fairs they attend around the state. Primary responsibility will rest with the health plans to explain the new benefits to members.

The CBO contracts have been extended through August 31. Ms. Davis could not speak on the plans of Accenture regarding the use of CBOs; however, it has been suggested by some policymakers that CBOs will have as much support, if not more involvement than in the past. The coalition will try to reach Anne Heiligenstein or someone from the OES (Office of Eligibility Services) to attend the next coalition meeting and give an update on the status of integrated implementation and the state's expectations of Accenture.

Ms. Davis indicated that approval on the CHIP HIFA Premium assistance waiver is expected within the next couple of months. The HIFA waiver targets uninsured CHIP-eligible children whose parents have access to employee-based insurance. The state will give the parent a subsidy to enroll the family into its employee-based insurance instead of CHIP. The proposed premium is \$150, but will offer fewer benefits than the CHIP benefit packet.

The CHIP and Medicaid rules will be released in June and implementation will be September 1, 2005.

To get a brief update on the latest news from HHSC, subscribe to HHS E-News: <http://www.tcada.state.tx.us/mailman/listinfo/hhse-news>

Anne Dunkelberg asked Ms. Davis about the plans to implement a last-minute rider to SB1, which authorizes HHSC to begin providing prenatal care to pregnant women under 200% FPL who do not already qualify for Medicaid maternity coverage, using CHIP funds. Ms Davis indicated that HHSC had of course been involved in analysis for the rider, but there was not yet a firm plan or timeline for implementation. Others noted that there had been concerns by hospitals that the conversion of deliveries by immigrant mothers (both lawful permanent residents and undocumented women) from "Emergency Medicaid" to CHIP funding could hurt DSH funding, but presumably these concerns have been resolved. Dunkelberg noted that all this development work was done behind closed doors, and no bills or hearings had been held on the topic. The group asked Ms. Davis to add this policy to the list of topics upon which the Coalition would like regular updates.

Update on CHIP

Patti Everitt gave an update on the actions taken by the budget conference committee on Monday, May 16. The budget conference committee added \$3.3 million to fully restore mental health benefits to pre-2003 levels. The budget conference committee redirected \$12.4 million from restoration of the 2.5% cut in provider rates to utilization and enrollment. This will add approximately 20,000 children to the enrollment estimates for the biennium, but remains more than 150,000 below 2003 enrollment. The committee did not address the matter regarding elimination or reduction in CHIP coverage for legal immigrant children. There was no discussion on Article 11 (the "wish list"), which includes items of consideration if additional revenue is identified.

There was brief discussion by the group for the push for 12-months continuous CHIP eligibility. The group also discussed formulating a list to get thank yous out to legislators.

Children's Defense Fund is working with other national organizations to address federal issues regarding Medicaid cuts. Patti Everitt will organize a local meeting in Austin to discuss the framework from a coalition perspective. If you are interested in participating in this meeting, please contact Patti at peveritt@childrensdefense.org.

Other business

Families USA has launched a campaign called *Medicaid: It's Personal*. To access the different stories told by Medicaid families, please click on the following link: [http://www.familiesusa.org/site/PageServer?pagename=Medicaid Action Stories](http://www.familiesusa.org/site/PageServer?pagename=Medicaid_Action_Stories)

Medicaid Matters is a resource that can help you create personalized materials and tools for your outreach efforts. For more information, click on the following link: <http://www.medicaidmatters2005.org/>

The next CHIP coalition meeting will be held on Friday, June 17, 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. at TMA, 401 W. 15th Street, in the Thompson Auditorium, 1st floor.

With no other agenda items, the CHIP Coalition meeting adjourned at 12:50 p.m.