

Texas CHIP Coalition & Eligibility Work Group Minutes
Friday, August 15th, 2008 11:00 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.
May Owen Conference Room, 10th Floor
Texas Medical Association

Attendees: Anne Dunkelberg, *CPPP*; Laura Guerra-Cardus, *Children's Defense Fund*; Stacey Warren, *Texas Medical Association*; Durquia Guillen, *Any Baby Can*; Eileen Garcia-Matthews, *Texans Care for Children*; Miryam Bujanda, *Methodist Healthcare Ministries*; Tanya Vargas, *Superior Health Plan*; Angela McCoy, *MedImmune*; John Berta, *Texas Hospital Association*; Morgan Walthall, *March of Dimes*; Kevin Denmark, *Maximus*; Candise Spikes, *Catholic Health Association of Texas*; Shane Brewington, *Texas Health & Human Services*; E. Rex Ann Shotwell, *Insure-a-Kid*; Bryan Sperry, *CHAT*; Ed Berger, *Seton*; Melissa Shannon, *CPPP*.

Via conference call: Shelton Green, *Christian Life Commission*; JT Dwyer, *CHIP Coalition Dallas*; King Hillier, *Harris County Hospital District*; Toni Van Buren, *United Way (San Antonio)*

Anne Dunkelberg called the meeting to order at 11:04AM

HHSC Budget Hearing Updates

Dr. Guerra-Cardus began the meeting with an update on the HHSC Budget Hearing. The hearing received testimony from 30 experts reporting on a variety of issues including maintaining essential client services, expanding critical services, and carrying out large scale system improvements. There were 18 exceptional items for review; recommendations will be submitted in October. More information on the hearing can be found at:

http://www.hhsc.state.tx.us/news/presentations/LAR_080808.pdf.

The Coalition discussed many of the concerns that much of the debate centered on maintaining existing services. Ms Bujanda commented on the need for coalition members to do more to educate members at the council level – their role in the process is to help the agency get stakeholder input rather than budgetary concerns. Mr. Sperry agreed and reminded the Coalition of the trend of maintaining the CHIP and Medicaid budget via emergency funding. Many children's health advocates have accepted using the most conservative eligibility numbers as an alternative to program cuts, but this potential leaves the program up for attack in the future. Given that there was no increase in funding to allow for the growth of inflation, the message must focus that emergency funding for CHIP and Medicaid is nothing new.

The final point on the HHSC budget hearings regarded outreach and education funds. Currently, Texas spends \$7 million to cover marketing and outreach for all of Medicaid, food stamps, TANF and CHIP. To contrast, Colorado spends about the same amount on marketing and education on the CHIP program, and has only about 175,000 uninsured children.

Items for Follow-Up

The details of the HHSC Budget Hearing on September 11, 2008 will be distributed on the Coalition listserv and members will be encouraged to testify and feedback to the Coalition. Ms Dunkelberg stated that she will request that a representative from HHSC speak at the next CHIP Coalition meeting speak on the LAR.

Principles

Ms Dunkelberg drew the group's attention to the previous legislative principles to generate ideas to draft the upcoming principles for the 81st legislative session. It was agreed that many of the categories

from the last session will remain intact, but will be updated to reflect current circumstances, and to make the final draft more concise than in 2007. The group decided there will be a stronger emphasis on reaching eligible children, outreach and education, and updated concerns about safety nets and reimbursements.

The group also discussed the importance of framing the message around providing health care for every child, and should include a very general message on the need for coverage for children at every income level, rather than a specific call for a CHIP buy-in program. More specific elements of covering every child will be included in the Texas Finish Line Agenda. This will help to balance some of the concerns of CHIP coalition members who wish to focus their advocacy efforts on enrolling currently-eligible uninsured children. Ms Dunkelberg noted that there were many members in the legislature prepared to support the idea of a CHIP buy-in, but we must be careful to ensure that eligibility and Medicaid problems are not lost in enthusiasm for CHIP.

The Coalition members agreed to add a section to reflect the need of maternal health and improve the coordination of public programs for women. Ms Walthall noted that the national volunteers from the March of Dimes will be meeting in mid-September to discuss maternal health, specifically pre-term birth rates, smoking cessation and the Medicaid waver - she will offer additional suggestions at the next Coalition meeting.

The Coalition members discussed the following ideas for the new draft of principles:

I. Introduction

- Number of uninsured children in Texas
- Number of eligible children without access to care
- Emphasis on cost effectiveness (fiscally responsible) – federal funding makes this an affordable option for kids at every level

II. Covering Eligible Children – title to reflect goal of getting currently eligible kids covered.

- Some language on shared responsibility and update presumptive eligibility
- Address outreach, marketing & funding
 - Training – CBO's and providers to take on Medicaid patients
 - Marketing funds (build on existing structure) – major cuts with growing need, lack of PSAs
- Benefit cuts, payment rates and cost sharing

III. Things we care about (catch all bullets)

- Benefits package – comprehensive coverage
- Payment rates & cost sharing
- Physician capacity & maintain investment made from Frew lawsuit
- Impact on assets – need to analyze how much progress made with rate increases
- Mindful of higher income kids – plug Medicaid buy-in – bring kids in with a more general approach

Items for Follow-Up

Ms Dunkelberg said she would work on creating a short perinatal type list with general bullets in time for the next meeting – smaller groups may be more appropriate to tackle this. She also committed to

completing a draft of principles and to see if she can organize a HHSC member to come and speak about the state of the LAR at the next Coalition meeting.

Ms Walthall committed to reporting on the outcomes from the national level meeting of the March of Dimes and adding their maternity suggestion to the principles.

Finish line

The Finish Line bids was successful, and are now working on the sign-on push, and currently having 13 of the 20 necessary endorsements. Dr. Guerra-Cardus requested that members would encourage any known groups that working on increasing children's coverage to get in touch. One aim of the Finish Line project is to establish a regional coordinator committee to build strong communication and start satellite CHIP Coalitions. Ms Garcia-Matthews stated that they had a contact for many of the regions, but still needed the names of advocates in Laredo, Jefferson, Tyler, Amarillo and San Angelo. She asked if anyone in the group could provide contacts in these areas it would be helpful. The first regional coordinator committee meeting will be held sometime in October.

Dr. Guerra-Cardus informed the Coalition of the work she is doing with business advisors from Houston and San Antonio to strengthen business support on children's health care. They are framing the discussion to reflect business' needs. She welcomed anyone who was interested in getting involved to get in touch.

Ms Dunkelberg noted that there has been some difficulty in linking information between the CHIP Coalition and the Finish Line project. She requested that members spread the word and committed look into streamlining the contact list and improving listserv instructions.

With no other agenda items the CHIP Coalition meeting adjourned at 12:27 p.m.

Eligibility Workgroup

Attendees: Anne Dunkelberg, *CPPP*; Laura Guerra-Cardus, *Children's Defense Fund*; Eileen Garcia-Matthews, *Texas Care for Children*; Kevin Denmark, *Maximus*; E. Rex Ann Shotwell, *Insure-a-Kid*; John Berta, *Texas Hospital Association*; Melissa Shannon, *CPPP*.

There were no participants on the conference call.

Dr. Guerra-Cardus called the meeting to order at 12:45 p.m.

Dr. Guerra-Cardus began by recapping HHSC's attendance at the last meeting. She asked the members what the next steps were or if there were any additional questions to address at the next meeting HHSC would be attending. Ms Dunkelberg suggested that the group (seeking HHSC's input and guidance) to create 2-4 fact sheets to aid clients through the application process.

Dr. Guerra-Cardus noted the need for better collaboration between HHSC, communities and CBOs (both contracted and non-contracted) to repair the deteriorating relationship and improve best practice. She suggested that coalition members identify topics and provide advice and some assistance with hosting a meeting for CBOs, conference calls, establishing benchmarks and additional training. This will likely help to reduce some of the problems outlined in the new issue log.

Ms Dunkelberg called the group's attention to the latest version of the issue log and asked for feedback. Mr. Denmark stated that the draft had already been a helpful tool in clarifying and addressing more general concerns. Ms Dunkelberg commented that the issue log serves dual processes

- the categories assist the group in tracking individual problems, but also identifies larger systematic concerns. The group agreed that it is not necessary to include every instance clients' encounter but to document and track stories that should be publicized as systematic problems of the agency to correct the complacency around the HHSC statistics which do not adequately reflect the circumstances.

Items for Follow-Up

Dr. Guerra-Cardus and Ms Shotwell committed to include the specific examples they have been collecting into the new version of the issue log.

Ms Dunkelberg committed to drafting (or recruiting volunteers to do first drafts of) three separate 'How-To' Sheets in the next few months, which will include: '*Submitting a Correct Application*'; '*Special Tips on Documenting Income*' (to aid individuals getting paid in cash or have irregular documentation); and another on '*If You've Recently Changed Jobs*'.

All members said they would take the issue log back to their organizations and submit their own top ten concerns that keep families from obtaining coverage. They also vowed to disseminate details of the CHIP Coalition and Finish Line Campaign to their contacts to increase communication and activity.

With no other agenda items the Eligibility Workgroup meeting adjourned at 1:45 p.m.