

Texas CHIP Coalition Minutes
Friday, December 15, 2006 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.
Thompson Auditorium, 1st floor
Texas Medical Association

Attendees: Anne Dunkelberg, CPPP; Kit Abney Spelce, Insure-a-Kid; Tanya Vargas, Insure-a-Kid; Lynn Hudson, C-NPA; Cecile Carson, TACHC; Katie Coburn, TACHC; Julia Marsden, League of Women Voters; Jill Johnson, Texans Care for Children; Jeanne Stamp, Texas Homeless Education Office; Kitty Allen, Harris County Hospital District; Rita Hanson, Texas Pediatric Society; Jason Cooke, Health Management Associates; Candise Spikes, CHA of Texas; Ed Berger, Seton Health Plan; Barbara Best, Children's Defense Fund; Robin Butler, Children's Hospital Association of Texas

Via conference call: Julia Easley, Children's Medical Center Dallas; Denise Rose, Texas Children's Hospital

Anne Dunkelberg called the meeting to order at 11:10 a.m.

News/Updates from Coalition Members

Ms. Johnson provided the group with copies of the Texans Care for Children legislative agenda and Children's Campaign. The documents are also available on the Texans Care for Children website or by contacting Ms. Johnson. Ms. Dunkelberg noted that while Texans Care for Children's carries a much broader agenda, they did include the core elements of the Texas CHIP Coalition/Insure Texas Kids principles as part of that larger agenda.

Ms. Stamp with the Texas Homeless Education Office gave an overview of her group's program and services. She stated that on any given day there are currently 180,000 children in homeless shelters. These kids are identified through the school system and her group provides oversight to the school system to make sure that teachers and staff understand the services available to the kids as well as set up collaborative efforts with other district programs that help meet their needs. She also provided information on Women's Legislative Days that will be taking place January 28-30 in Austin.

National Town Hall Meeting on Child Health Coverage

Ms. Julia Easley spoke on the National Town Hall Meeting on Child Health Coverage that will be held at 11 a.m. CST on January 11th. About 3 dozen communities throughout the U.S. will be participating and in Texas, Children's Medical Center of Dallas, Texas Children's Hospital in Houston, CHRISTUS Santa Rosa Children's Hospital in San Antonio and possibly Children's Hospital of Austin (Dell Children's Medical Center) will host local events in conjunction with the broadcast. On the national level, Senator Hatch will be a presenter and at each local event they are planning a program that will include local leaders speaking prior to the broadcast with a Q&A session afterward. Children's Hospital Association of Texas will have an action alert message on their Capwiz program that will allow participants to send letters on the importance of

CHIP and child health coverage to their state legislators. Each of the Texas locations are planning on having computer terminals set up at the events so participants can send messages out that day. They are still in the planning process for the event but Julia will send out flyers that can be distributed on the listserv and more details will be made available to the group as they are confirmed.

Ms. Spelce noted that Seton is trying to organize a local event. They have had difficulty in finding a location that will receive the satellite feed but think they are close to finding a spot. They would set up the same type of format as the others and Tom Spence with KLRU has already agreed to facilitate the event.

SCHIP Reauthorization

Information was set out to the listserv earlier in the week with details on the Families USA conference call to discuss SCHIP reauthorization. The call will be a national health care advocates' perspective on the call to action to reauthorize SCHIP so discussion will not surround state specific issues.

Ms. Dunkelberg stated that Texas is at a disadvantage because since the state has allowed its CHIP enrollment to decline, other states that have fully utilized their CHIP programs want part of our allocation of funds. Texas more than any other state needs to lobby for a block grant and allocation formula that will cover eligible but not enrolled children. Current block grant allocation has just enough to cover those currently being served so money is needed to allow growth. In a conversation with Ms. Best, Rep. John Davis stated that HHSC's assumption is that there will be 100,000 mothers a month being served by the CHIP perinatal program which will be a substantial draw on the CHIP block grant. If that holds true, in order for the program to grow, either through the perinate program or by enrolling eligible but not enrolled, there must be more money in the block grant. With the November election results Congress is more favorable to the reauthorization, but it's not a definite because they still have to pay for it and show fiscal responsibility. The Texas legislature also needs to do the right things by the program or it makes it difficult to go to Congress to ask for more money. Ms. Dunkelberg reiterated that this is a good opportunity to work toward the big goal which is that every child has access to health care.

Ms. Dunkelberg also informed the group of technical corrections that had been made to the Deficit Reduction Act. For cost sharing:

- Patients below 100% of poverty level, cost-sharing is not enforceable. Services or prescriptions may not be denied if the patient cannot pay the co-pay.
- children covered under the Family Opportunity Act are exempt from cost sharing. (The Family Opportunity Act is a provision in the DRA that gives states the option to allow children with disabilities with family income above a state's usual eligibility levels to enroll in Medicaid).

In addition, any child in foster care is now not subject to citizenship verification

CHIP News/Updates

The Texas CHIP Coalition/Insure Texas Kids briefing on the legislative agenda will be held on Thursday, February 1st in the Capitol extension, room E2.002. Attendees will be invited for lunch around 12:30 and the briefing will take place from 1:00 – 2:30. They have received bi-

partisan support with Sen. Van de Putte, Sen. Averitt and Rep. Turner co-sponsoring and are considering approaching others on both sides of the aisle to lend their name to the event.

Ms. Hudson asked for an update on the CHIP Perinate program. Ms. Dunkelberg stated that 100,000 had been in the budget request for '07 and approximately the same amount for '08. She assumes the number is based on TP30 related to actual number of deliveries. Current concern is how they are registering for the program. Ms. Vargas stated that she had been on a training call yesterday and flyers are being passed out on the program but they did not state if they were targeting Title 5 providers. Ms. Dunkelberg expressed concern that this was something that needed to be watched; given the bad history the state has of assuming savings and prematurely allocating funds that it was important that the group stay on top of any allocation of Title 5 funds. If there are any freed up from savings, CSHCN would be a program where if allocated they could do some good.

CHIP caseloads for December increased by approximately 5,000. This is the first time there has been three consecutive months of growth in the CHIP program since September, 2003. The count is still down from 2003 numbers but at least the trend is going up. The December Medicaid numbers have not been received, yet, but given that there was an increase in November the hope is that December will have risen as well.

Enrollment/Eligibility

Ms. Dunkelberg asked the group for updates on any Medicaid/CHIP enrollment problems they were still seeing.

Ms. Vargas stated the process did seem to be faster – applications were being mailed within 2-3 weeks instead of a month. They were still seeing problems with income verification and items being lost. For income, Schedule Cs must now be provided in addition to the 1040 tax form for self-employed persons. For citizenship, she noted that HHSC is asking for birth certificates from children that have moved from CHIP to Medicaid. Ms. Dunkelberg said this needed to be followed up on as it was HHSC's policy that if a child was born in a Texas hospital that verification of birth would suffice in place of a birth certificate.

Ms. Vargas said that HHSC is also pending applications if a family has non-citizen kids that they are not applying for coverage but must include on the application. They are asking for citizenship verification documents on all kids on the application, even those that coverage is not being applied for. Ms. Dunkelberg stated that she would contact Joanne Molina and bring her attention to the matter.

Ms. Dunkelberg stated that she is also hearing complaints from people and kids with disabilities that DADS is backlogged in getting their functional reviews so apparently their eligibility staff is also experiencing problems.

Ms. Dunkelberg challenged the group to think about specific recommendations that could be made to advance the operation of fixing the CHIP eligibility problems. Case in point is that current reports show that CHIP families have higher rates of missing information than Medicaid families. The goal is to provide recommendations for an operational fix that will put in place a

competent system where the applicants understand what they need to provide and have assistance available to provide these items.

Ms. Spelce commented that they have asked that CBOs be allowed to scan and electronically submit applications. This would cut out faxes and hard copy information that could potentially be lost. Mr. Berger added that they had spoken with HHSC in October on this issue and at that time HHSC stated they did not have the capability for electronic transmittals but it was something they could explore and Anne Heiligenstein and Aurora LaBrun have expressed interest in looking at the system Seton Health Plan currently uses. Mr. Berger recommends asking the legislature for a pilot project to see if submitting applications electronically would speed up the process and cut down on some of the errors.

Presentation by Barbara Best

Ms. Best updated the group on the Family Profiles Project. They have collected 61 stories from across the state and have a photographer scheduled to take pictures of all of the families that have provided stories. The goal is to have representation from every media market. They still need assistance in finding families from Abilene, Amarillo, Tyler, Waco and Wichita Falls. A book will be completed in January that will contain the stories and pictures. A TCC/ITK meeting will be scheduled as the publish date draws nearer to discuss media strategies surrounding the book.

In a meeting with Rep. Davis and Rep. Noriega last week, Ms. Best discussed on-going processing problems they were still seeing with CHIP/Medicaid applications and provided copies of letters with erroneous information that have gone out to families recently.

Ms. Best presented the CHIP cuts powerpoint that CDF developed in collaboration with Children at Risk, Gateway to Care, Harris County Hospital District, Memorial Hermann, Texas Children's Hospital and United Way of the Gulf Coast. The powerpoint was shown to the Greater Houston Partnership Health Care Advisory Committee and at Representative elect Ellen Cohen's Town Hall meeting and had received an excellent response at both events. The goal is to develop area "CHIP speaker bureaus" that can present at local chambers of commerce, business groups and civic organizations to get CHIP on their agendas.

Ms. Dunkelberg questioned if any of the local chambers had Medicaid and CHIP action items on their agendas. Ms. Rose stated that the Greater Houston Partnership has just finalized a local position paper on Medicaid and CHIP. Ms. Easley said that it is included in the Dallas Chamber's legislative priorities but she's not sure of the specific request. Ms. Spelce thought that the Austin Chamber focused on the uninsured but nothing specifically mentioning CHIP/Medicaid Programs. She added that the Indigent Care Collaboration in Austin had recently been presented with the Code Red report and thought it would be helpful to try and tie part of our message in with reports that are already being presented to these groups such as the Code Red and Perryman reports.

Mr. Cooke advised although current HHSC data shows crowd-out to be only at 1-2%, this may be one of the arguments presented as business groups question that employees don't take advantage of employer sponsored insurance and apply for CHIP. Ms. Dunkelberg stated that

employer sponsored insurance for child coverage is many times very expensive and parents cannot afford the coverage offered and that census uninsured data shows a bigger erosion of employer insurance among adults then kids. Since there are no programs for adults this shows that crowd-out is not a problem.

Ms. Best and Ms. Dunkelberg are developing a FAQ and myth buster hand-out that will address questions and misconceptions that may be brought up.

The next CHIP Coalition meeting will be held on Friday, January 12th, 11 a.m. – 1 p.m. at TMA, 401 W. 15th Street in the Thompson Auditorium, 1st Floor. Any agenda items or listserv items to be sent out may be e-mailed to Anne Dunkelberg. The CHIP Coalition website has also recently been re-done and if anyone has items they would like to include on it please e-mail to Anne or Children's Hospital Association of Texas.

With no other agenda items the CHIP Coalition meeting adjourned at 1:00 p.m.