

Texas CHIP Coalition Minutes
Friday, July 20, 2007 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; Roxann Shotwell, Insure-a-Kid; Julia Marsden, League of Women Voters; Jodie Smith, Texans Care for Children; Celina Pena, Methodist Health Care Ministries; Victoria Rogers; Catholic Charities of Central Texas; Juanita Vargas; Catholic Charities of Central Texas; Stephanie Svoboda, Catholic Charities of Central Texas; Jeff Miller, Advocacy, Inc.; Amy Young, Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities; Candise Spikes, Catholic Charities of Texas; Edwin Evans, Seton Health Plan; Katie Coburn, TACHC, Patricia Kolodzey, THA; Robin Butler, Children's Hospital Association of Texas

Via conference call: Jan Scott, Texas Children's Health Plan; Vicki Johnson-Stephens, Children's Defense Fund

Anne Dunkelberg called the meeting to order at 11:20 a.m. The delay in start was due to technical difficulties with the conference phone. During the delay, Jodie Smith with Texans Care for Children reported on a pilot project she is working on with the Texas Youth Commission. The project revolves around transition planning back into the community for the juveniles including having their CHIP or Medicaid in place at time of release. A caseworker will be working early on to make sure the paperwork is completed and the application will be processed centrally instead of out in the field. The project will have a state-wide roll-out this fall.

CBO Update from Catholic Charities of Central Texas/Eligibility Issues

Victoria Rogers, the new Program Coordinator for Catholic Charities of Central Texas provided an update on their outreach programs. The CBO received a grant in February, 2007, to service 16 counties in the Central Texas area. They have established a central office in Austin and then satellite offices in each of the 16 counties. They have managed to set up many of these satellite offices in churches and health care clinics. Ms. Rogers noted that the contract language from HHSC granted the CBOs considerable latitude and was not specific in how the money received was to be directed. The goals of their organization include expanded outreach and sign-up. She expressed some concern that they feel HHSC does not treat them on an equal level and provide them with open communication.

Ms. Dunkelberg stated that renewal rates for CHIP have also been in the low 60's for the past two months. That, combined with the recent Medicaid eligibility problems, show that even though restorative legislation may be enacted there is still an eligibility system in place that is not working. She reported on two examples that she had recently dealt with where families were unable to receive coverage.

Ms Pena with Methodist Healthcare Ministries stated that she has been communicating with the San Antonio Food Bank and they processed 64 applications for June. Their complaint is that with the dedicated areas being so large they have dedicated funds for outreach workers but not enough

money to get out and connect with the rural folks. The Food Bank was also unhappy that HHSC has no way of letting the CBOs know how many applications were being submitted as they do not have the capability to collect CBO#s off of applications.

Ms. Scott with Texas Children's Health Plan reported that they are still seeing the same issues. They have begun partnering with their CBO in Harris county and that other health plans may want to consider doing something similar so that there can be an avenue for information sharing.

Ms. Abney-Spelce with Insure-a-Kid noted that they have seen more problems with Medicaid - families have been unable to get through on 2-1-1, faxing issues and applications that are being submitted through TAA are not going to the state and being processed through the web portal.

Ms. Dunkelberg reported that she met with the data folks at HHSC on citizenship documentation denials. Last year data had been shared with her on the number of applications being denied or pended due to lack of citizenship documentation, however, those number stopped coming the beginning of this year. HHSC uses a two-code system for denials – 1 is “not US citizen” and 2 is “not providing citizenship documentation”. A recent audit showed that 60% of the codes were used in error. The problem seems to be with staff shortages and the lack of time to train.

A recommendation was made to start a workgroup to include the CBOs, health plans and the CHIP Coalition with an invitation also extended to HHSC. The benefits of opening lines of communication via this workgroup were discussed around the table and all were in agreement. Ms. Dunkelberg stated that she will work with Barbara Best to put some time of informal communication together first and work-up a formal letter. Plans would be to hold the meetings once a month in the beginning and then move to quarterly. Ms. Dunkelberg asked that any one interested in facilitating the meetings to contact her.

SCHIP

Ms. Dunkelberg stated that she will send information via the listserv next week on what the Senate bill does as well as the misinformation being reported by the Bush administration.

Positive details of the Senate bill include 28 billion for higher CHIP block grant spending to allow for growth, 5 billion for additional Medicaid spending, incentives for higher match rates for increasing CHIP and Medicaid enrollment, 3.5 billion for outreach and quality of care initiatives. The bill does not allow for any improvement for the CHIP match for legal immigrants under the Immigrant Children's Health Improvement Act.

CHIP Coalition Business

In a recent conversation, Ms. Dunkelberg and Mr. Sperry discussed changing the identity of the coalition to commit to covering all kids in Texas and if there should be a name change in conjunction with the change in rhetoric. After a round table-discussion it was agreed that broadening the focus of the group to covering all children would be beneficial but that due to the positive name recognition the group should continue to operate as the “Texas CHIP Coalition”.

Ms. Dunkelberg reported on two grant projects that are currently underway:

CPPP, CDF and Texas Care for Children are currently jointly involved in a Children's Health Care Narrative Project that centers around support to cover all children. Packard recently announced a second round of this project to include funding for 12 states for one year to look at groundwork laying for covering children at any income level. CPPP will submit the application to be the lead on this project.

Consumer Voices for Coverage – RWJ grant program intended to build larger consumer grassroots support for universal coverage, not focused solely on children's health care. Groups with the Texas CHIP Coalition could partner on the project but the lead must be a consumer organization. The challenge is to come up with an ambitious yet doable agenda.

Both foundations want to fund in states where there is a good chance for program expansion.

There will not be a meeting in August due to the conflicting schedules of all of the facilitators. The next CHIP Coalition meeting will be held on Friday, September 21st, 11 a.m. – 1 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 12:45 p.m.