

Texas CHIP Coalition Minutes  
Friday, May 19, 2006 11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.  
May Owen Conference Room, 10<sup>th</sup> floor  
Texas Medical Association

Anne Dunkelberg called the meeting to order at 11:20 a.m.

Attendees: Toby Cole Hooper, insure.a.kid; Anne Dunkelberg, Center for Public Policy Priorities; Anne Wingler & Barbara Best, Children's Defense Fund; Durquia Guillen, Any Baby Can; Barbara Maxwell, Texas Association of Health Plans; Morgan Walthall, March of Dimes; Lynne Hudson, Coalition of Nurse Advanced Practitioners; Stella Rodriguez, Texas Association of Community Action Agencies; Peggy Gullledge, TAA-THSteps & STAR; Miryam Bujanda, Methodist Healthcare Ministries of South Texas; Bee Moorhead, Texas IMPACT; Denise Rose, Texas Children's Hospital; Julia Marsden, League of Women Voters of Texas; Brenda Trolin, Catholic Health Association of Texas; Beth Schlechter, Indigent Care Collaboration; Jeanne Stamp, Texas Homeless Education Office; Julia Easley, Children's Medical Center of Dallas; Jodie Smith, Texans Care for Children; Bryan Sperry, CHAT; Kristin Merani, Office of Representative Sylvester Turner; Jan Scott, Texas Children's Health Plan; Diane Rhodes, TDA; Sonia Lara, Texas Association of Community Health Centers

Anne Dunkelberg called the meeting to order at 11:20 a.m.

Summary of May 6 Event in Houston

Barbara Best provided a summary of Representative Sylvester Turner's May 6<sup>th</sup> event in Houston. The event was initiated by a letter from Representative Turner to Commissioner Hawkins and was organized in 2 weeks. The letter provided a list of what would be needed to make the event a success (letter is attached for your review). There was plenty of earned media up front to advertise the event and HHSC also sent notices of the event to families that had received a missing information letter. There were approximately 1,200 – 2,000 families that attended the event and about 544 of those had their applications/renewals processed on-site. There were about 20 booths at the event that provided other helpful information for families, and included health plans and WIC. The media and outreach prior to the event advised families what to bring to the event in order to process their applications/renewals. Barbara will share the materials (attached) used to promote and prepare for the event and townhall meeting. Barbara believes its key to ask elected officials to initiate.

Kristin Merani with the office of Representative Sylvester Turner also added that there were a very diverse group of people that was served. Representatives Al Edwards, John Davis, and Carlos Uresti (San Antonio) were present as well as Representative-elect Borris Miles and Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee. There was a good turnout of African American families and that was attributed to Representative Turner making visits to the area churches to announce the event and encourage families to attend. Representative Turner also invited the entire Houston delegation to the event.

There was a brief discussion on implementing this type of event in different areas of the state, including San Antonio, Dallas and Waco. Miryam Bujanda reported that there will be a meeting next week with the entire Bexar county delegation, and hoped to include not just state officials, but all city and county officials as well. Miryam and others planning these events in their communities was asked to share any information about their event with the TCC listserv. There was also a brief discussion to begin planning an event in Travis County as well. Jan Scott with

the Texas Children's Health Plan encouraged others that coordinate similar events in their area to make sure the health plans get a copy of the letters that HHSC will send out to families about the event. For the Houston event, the health plans received questions on the letters (HHSC sent over 10,000 letters to targeted zip codes for Houston families who had not renewed because of missing information about the May 6 event), but could not answer questions because they had not received the letter from HHSC.

Brenda Trolin with the Catholic Health Association of Texas introduced herself to the coalition and stated that her group represents about 15 dioceses in Texas. Her group would be happy to assist with promoting events as well as with volunteers for the events organized locally throughout the state where they have a presence.

#### TCC Letter to HHSC

Anne Dunkelberg passed out the latest draft of the coalition's letter to Commissioner Hawkins outlining the coalition's recommendations for reversing the enrollment and renewal trends in CHIP and children's Medicaid enrollment. There were 17 state organizations and 17 regional/local organizations that had signed on so far and the list was expected to grow. The final letter was sent May 25<sup>th</sup> with a total of 28 state 36 regional/local organizations.

#### TCC Principles for the 80<sup>th</sup> Legislature

Anne provided a copy of all prior TCC principles from 1999 to 2005. The idea is to keep the principles broad enough so that all organizations can feel comfortable taking them back to their memberships and endorsing the principles. Anne stated that because the TCC is an ad-hoc coalition, defining TCC membership for each session depends on whether or not an organization signs on to the TCC principles. The goal is to again reach a consensus, despite that there are broader issues that may be advocated by individual organizations outside TCC principles. Anne compiled a list or summary of items that are being considered for the principles TCC will advocate for the upcoming legislative session. They include: (1) provider reimbursements and availability; (2) application/renewal policies that are family friendly—simplified; (3) continued funding for outreach and procurement of CBO contracts; (4) restore income disregards for CHIP; (5) return to the original 90-day uninsured policy pre-HB2292; (6) advocate for 12 months continuous eligibility; (7) modify the CHIP asset test policy—either improve or eliminate it all together; (8) advocate for more parity for Medicaid program as compared to CHIP; (9) address the changes proposed under DRA (co-payments for children prescription drugs and ER use for non-emergencies, benefits packages, medical savings account) (10) expansion of coverage for all Texas families using a “buy-in” and developing a sliding scale fee for all income levels above 200% FPL.

The TCC should focus on the 700,000 children that can be insured now with the current programs as they exist if the state and partners did a better job of enrolling them. This justifies the push for more outreach and enrollment and simplifying processes and making sure the processes work. The TCC must frame the issue realistically—it is an investment and not welfare. Families do not receive cash benefits for being on the programs. Also, TCC should focus on the health care system imploding—increases in improper utilization of emergency rooms and hospitals.

It was suggested that between now and the next meeting that a small group of the TCC work on packaging the principles to have a draft ready for the next coalition meeting.

#### Deficit Reduction Act

Anne reported that there are many concerned with some of the state options under the DRA. Anne encouraged TCC members to view a DRA presentation by HHSC which was given recently

during the last HHSC public forum. Barbara Maxwell with TAHP volunteered to work on a summary of the state options under the DRA and what they mean for Texas. Anne said that Helen Kent Davis is also working on this issue for TMA and said that maybe Helen and Barbara could help facilitate a discussion on this issue at the next meeting. Morgan Walthall with March of Dimes said their national office has already produced a worksheet on the DRA state options. Morgan was asked to share that with the coalition when the worksheet becomes public information. Anne Dunkelberg and Miryam Bujanda with Methodist Healthcare Ministries will work together to look at other states to explore ideas on what they are doing under their DRA state options.

Anne reported that the Children's Hospital Association of Texas (CHAT) may be able to take on managing the TCC website. The generous grant from Amerigroup has expired and so the TCC members may be asked to help make small donations to help maintain the website so CHAT does not bear the entire cost on its own.

Anne announced that if anyone needs any Medicaid numbers from HHSC, she has them up to May 2006. She can be contacted directly if anyone should need them.

The next CHIP Coalition meeting will be held on **Friday, June 16**, 11am-1pm at TMA, 401 W. 15<sup>th</sup> Street, in the May Owen Conference Room, 10<sup>th</sup> floor.

With no other agenda items, the CHIP Coalition meeting adjourned at 1:38 p.m.