

**Texas CHIP Coalition & Eligibility Work Group Minutes**  
**Friday, October 24<sup>th</sup>, 2008 - 11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.**  
**May Owen Conference Room, 10th Floor**  
**Texas Medical Association**

Attendees: Robin Butler, *Children's Hospital Association of Texas*; Kevin Denmark, *Maximus*; Shannon Foster, *Seton Health Plan*; Durquia Guillen, *Any Baby Can*; Eileen Garcia-Matthews, *Texans Care For Children*; Shelton Green, *Christian Life Commission*; Lynne Hudson, *Coalition of Nurse Advanced Practitioners*; Maria Huemmer, *Texas Catholic Conference*; Helen Kent-Davis, *Texas Medical Association*; Scott McAninch, *San Antonio Non-Profit Council*; Jeff Miller, *Advocacy Inc*; Melissa Shannon, *CPPP*; E. Rex Ann Shotwell, *Insure-a-Kid*; Mary Sondgeroth, *Central Texas Mental Health Association*; Bryan Sperry, *Children's Hospital Association of Texas*; Candise Spikes, *Catholic Health Association of Texas*; Jeanne Stamp, *Texas Homeless Education Office*; Morgan Walthall, *March of Dimes*.

Via conference call: Mary Helen Gonzalez, *Community First Health Plan*.

Bryan Sperry called the meeting to order at 11:10AM

**Policy Recommendations and Goals of the Principles**

Mr. Sperry opened up discussion on the latest draft of the Coalition's Health Care Principles, and invited members to suggest improvements so the sign-on campaign can be completed by early December. Generally, the group agreed that the principles were quite well written. Ms Kent-Davis reminded the group that there would be a series of more detailed one-page briefs for specific sections to provide better information to legislators and their staff. Coalition members recommended strengthening language either in the principles or in the one-page briefs around timely access to prenatal service, include behavioral health for all children not just infants and toddlers and address enrollment problems in prenatal care. With the positive feedback and no additional suggestions, Ms Kent-Davis noted that the final draft would be distributed to the Coalition via the listserv in early November.

Mr. Sperry informed the group of an upcoming CHIP Coalition event at the Capital on the 30<sup>th</sup> of January to provide legislators and staffers with more information on the benefits of CHIP and Children's Medicaid, and on the Coalition's Principles for the session. There was a similar event held last session, which included presentations that staffers and members found very useful in generating a lot of support for CHIP on both sides of the aisle. The event this year will be particularly important with increased budgetary concerns following the economic downturn and Hurricane Ike. Many members are concerned that the gains in children's health made in the last session may be in jeopardy, the Governor a strong desire to restrict discretionary spending and a likely shortfall in the 82<sup>nd</sup> session, may decrease support for previous progress made with House Bill 109.

Mr. Sperry and Ms. Kent-Davis encouraged coalition members to read the recent legislative report from the Texas Public Policy Foundation. Among TPPF's

recommendations for the 2009 legislative session are that legislators repeal HB 109, the bill of primary focus of the CHIP Coalition. HB 109 was enacted in 2007 to streamline the CHIP eligibility process, and to oppose 12-months continuous coverage for children in Medicaid.

### **Texas Finish Line Update & CHIP Coalition Event**

The David & Lucile Packard Foundation included Texas as one of eight states awarded a major grant to support advocacy for state policy to increase access to affordable comprehensive health insurance for every child. The lead organizations participating in the Texas Finish Line Project include Children's Defense Fund, Texans Care for Children, and the Center for Public Policy Priorities and involve all of the partners of the CHIP Coalition and regional coordinators. Participants come from all across Texas and there is a two-tiered strategy to push for increased access to CHIP and Children's Medicaid targeted at the grass-top organizations (focused on the business community, advocacy organizations and various community groups) and the grass-roots. Scott McAninch of the San Antonio Non-Profit Council has been named as a Regional Coordinator.

#### **Texas Finish Line Campaign Regional Coordinators List**

**Bryan:** Jeannie McGuire of Project Unity - (979) 595-2900 - [jmcguire@project-unity.org](mailto:jmcguire@project-unity.org)

**Corpus:** Jose Gonzalez – Driscoll Children's Plan - (361) 694-5000 - [jose.gonzalez@dchstx.org](mailto:jose.gonzalez@dchstx.org)

**El Paso:** Alex Furrari of United Way - (915) 533-2434 - [afurnari@unitedwayelpaso.org](mailto:afurnari@unitedwayelpaso.org)

**Fort Worth:** Walter Taylor, MHMRA Tarrant County - 817-569-4788 - [Walter.Taylor@mhmrtc.org](mailto:Walter.Taylor@mhmrtc.org)

**Beaumont:** Laura Grimes, Beaumont ISD - [lgrimes@beaumont.k12.tx.us](mailto:lgrimes@beaumont.k12.tx.us)

**RGV:** Luisa Saenz and Olga Gabriel, Children's Defense Fund – Rio Grande Valley - 956.687.5437 - [lsaenz@cdfutexas.org](mailto:lsaenz@cdfutexas.org), [ogabriel@cdfutexas.org](mailto:ogabriel@cdfutexas.org)

**San Antonio:** Scott McAninch - San Antonio Non-Profit Council – 210.825.3252 - [scottm@sancouncil.org](mailto:scottm@sancouncil.org)

**Dallas:** Julia Easley, Dallas Children's Hospital - [JULIA.EASLEY@childrens.com](mailto:JULIA.EASLEY@childrens.com)

**Houston:** Laura Guerra-Cardus, Children's Defense Fund Texas - 713.644.4080 - [lguerracar@childrensdefense.org](mailto:lguerracar@childrensdefense.org)

**Austin:** Kit Abney, Insure A Kid, Seton Family of Hospitals - 512-324-8977 - [kabney@seton.org](mailto:kabney@seton.org)

**Waco:** Bambi Barron, Communities in Schools - (254) 753-6002 ext. 223 – [bbarron@cis-hot.org](mailto:bbarron@cis-hot.org)

**Amarillo:** Dorinda Bates, Coalition of Health Services -2 Care for Kids - (806) 337-1700 - [dorinda.bates@cohs.net](mailto:dorinda.bates@cohs.net)

**Lubbock:** Christina Cavarrubio, Healthy Lubbock - (806) 762-2600 - [CCavarrubio@chcl.tachc.org](mailto:CCavarrubio@chcl.tachc.org)

**Pending cities include:** Abilene, Tyler, Laredo, and San Angelo

The CHIP Coalition event at the Capital in January seeks to get a broad group of stakeholders to educate legislators on the importance of 12 month continuous coverage in Medicaid as well as CHIP and a simplified eligibility enrollment process. The other major message to convey to the Legislature is to enroll a greater number of uninsured children. The Finish Line Campaign is advocating for the CHIP buy-in provision to ensure the 500,000 children without coverage have an option without incentivizing families to request pay reductions or stay in jobs they are dissatisfied with. The CHIP buy-in provision would operate on a sliding scale and be available to families earning between 200-300% the federal poverty level. Dr. Guerra-Cardus noted that there will be a policy brief written to address concerns about crowd-out and adverse selection. More information is available via the Finish Line website - [txfinishline.org](http://txfinishline.org) – including a campaign sign-on and support for families.

Dr. Guerra-Cardus called for CHIP Coalition members to spread the word to similar organizations and sign-up to the Finish Line listserv for calls to action that are separate from the CHIP Coalition and other information regarding the project. She also noted that there will be several events in the run-up to session, including:

- Possible Press Conference with Senator Zaffirini – TBA
- Release of Storybook – January/February
- Family Panel for Legislative Staff & Elected Officials – January 23<sup>rd</sup> at the Capital
- Texas CHIP Coalition Briefing – January 30<sup>th</sup> at the Capital
- Children’s Advocacy Day (TNOYS, Texans Care For Children)– February 4<sup>th</sup>
- TECEC Early Childhood Day - Feb 17<sup>th</sup>
- CHIP Birthday – Virtual Child Health Advocacy Day – April 1<sup>st</sup>
- Hearings – Family Testimonials & Postcards

### **Children’s Defense Fund Story-Bank**

Dr. Guerra-Cardus reminded the group of the previous success of *In Harm’s Way*, which provided compelling stories that highlighted some of the problems families experience with the eligibility and enrollment process. She noted how effective the last report was in overcoming the negative perceptions of some members of the legislature and was instrumental in passing House Bill 109. Dr. Guerra-Cardus asked if everyone attending could identify one family by mid-November.

### **Children’s Mental Health Forum**

Ms Garcia-Matthews informed the group of the Children’s Mental Health Forum, which began in June and is headed by the Hogg Foundation and Texans Care for Children. The turn-out has been very promising with 50-60 stakeholders attending, including representatives from state agencies, staffers, advocacy organizations and families at each forum and a separate workgroup has been created to develop policy objectives that are then provided to the greater Forum.

The Children's Mental Health Forum has drafted their own set of legislative priorities, which seeks to establish a coordinated interagency plan to elevate both coordination of and accountability for children's mental health in Texas. They propose that the HHSC Office of Program Coordination for Children and Youth should lead a coordinated strategic planning process for all of the state agencies that serve children and youth (HHSC, DFPS, DSHS, DARS, DADS, TJPC, TYC, TEA, TWC, TDA). The Children's Mental Health forum also proposes an increase in funding for mental health services and targets improvements to the juvenile justice system. Ms Garcia-Matthews highlighted one agenda piece that addressed the juvenile justice system's termination rather than suspension of Medicaid or CHIP benefits while the young person is detained. Ms Stamp commented that this creates large gaps in coverage once the sentence has been completed. Ms Garcia-Matthews agreed and highlighted the need for better wrap around services to better assist children with mental illness.

### **Eligibility Work-group Update**

Ms Shotwell updated the group on Insure-a-Kid's completed draft of the 'How-To' sheets, which provide clear instructions on the documentation necessary to become successfully enrolled the first time. Ms Shotwell explained that they have some minor edits to make and the sheets will be distributed to the Coalition for feedback.

With no other discussion – the meeting was adjourned at 12:20.