

Texas CHIP Coalition Minutes
Friday, December 10, 2004, 11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
May Owen Conference Room, 10th Floor
Texas Medical Association

Bryan Sperry called the meeting to order at 11:10 a.m.

Bryan Sperry provided an update on federal policy issues from the National Association of Children's Hospitals (NACH) conference. Bryan reported that because of interest in reducing the size of the federal deficit, there might be pressure to reduce federal Medicaid spending in the budget process. Child health advocates will need to work to avoid harmful cutbacks to Medicaid.

HHSC Updates

Kimberly Davis provided the update for HHSC. She reported that Rick Allgeyer with HHSC Research & Planning was currently analyzing data impact of the CHIP asset test and that the results would be made available on the HHSC website. When asked about specific numbers on the impact of the asset test, Ms. Davis reported that hundreds of children have been deemed CHIP ineligible each month due to the asset test. She also reported that there are a significant number of pending applications due to insufficient information on vehicles. For example, the application FORM asks ONLY for the make and model of vehicle and a family will report "Nissan Xterra." However, ACS has programmed their computers to also require a detailed model number or letters, e.g. SE or LE. This lack of detail causes the family to receive a missing information letter from ACS and the application is then deemed pending. A change in computer programming would be required to make the computer calculate eligibility without the missing model letters or numbers, and that change might entail costs. HHSC is considering adding an example of a complete answer to the asset questionnaire to address the issue. Ms. Davis solicited ideas from coalition members on how to word the make and model question to ensure families give complete information. Ms Davis also reported that the new TexCare application was finalized and being distributed across the state as of earlier this month.

Ms. Davis reported that there is still no release date for the ICHP study. She explained that the HHSC internal review was a very extensive process.

Ms. Davis reported that the CHIP and Medicaid policy/benefit development would be moving under the HHSC unit assigned to oversee the Texas Medicaid Healthcare Partnership or TMHP (also operated by ACS). She also informed the coalition that Joanne Molina had resigned her position and was being promoted to policy manager of the HHSC integrated eligibility division. Ms. Molina will no longer give HHSC updates at the CHIP coalition meetings and Kimberly Davis will take her place.

CHIP coalition members reiterated their interest to provide input on internal development of policies and workgroups such as the premium payment workgroup. Ms. Davis was assigned to this project the previous day. She will be responsible for refining the recommendations of the workgroup and communicating those recommendations to stakeholders. Anne Dunkelberg expressed that the coalition would like to revitalize the dialogue with the commission regarding policy developments, particularly in having input in the early stages of policy development, as contrasted with commenting on nearly-finished policies. In a meeting with key coalition members in September, Commissioner Hawkins expressed interest in involving more stakeholder input. Anne suggested that the coalition follow up with the commissioner on including more stakeholder input and how that can be communicated to the lower levels of HHSC management.

Integrated Eligibility Update

Celia Hagert with CPPP gave an update on the status of the HHSC integrated eligibility initiative, which will integrate CHIP eligibility and enrollment into the same system as Medicaid, Food Stamps and TANF. She provided handouts and explained the history and process to date and shared CPPP's recommendations to HHSC on the initiative. She addressed the RFP process, key concerns with the call center proposal, as well as concerns that the staff levels proposed by HHSC will not be adequate to meet client needs; HHSC has proposed reducing both eligibility staff and local offices by nearly 60%. Caroline O'Conner with the Texas State Employees Union (TSEU) was also available to give an update on the activities of TSEU on how their members are addressing the concerns of the new integrated eligibility system including the loss of jobs and access for clients.

The handouts included CPPP Policy Pager No. 221 (available at www.cppp.org), Ms. Hagert's power point presentation (available via CHIP coalition listserv) and an announcement of the upcoming meeting of the Transition Legislative Oversight Committee on Tuesday, December 14.

Other Business

Patti Everitt provided a draft outline for a CDF report on the CHIP local impact describing preliminary findings from the CHIP family surveys illustrating the impact on families who lost CHIP benefits or lost CHIP altogether. Ms. Everitt also reported the release of the two-year longitudinal study of CHIP/Medicaid enrolled children. The study is titled *City of Mission Project* and is available by contacting Luisa Saenz at 1-866-581-5437 or 956-782-4000.

The next CHIP coalition meeting will be held on Friday, January 21, 2005 from 11:00am – 1:00 pm at TMA, Thompson Auditorium, 1st floor. The next meeting of the CHIP eligibility committee workgroup will be held on Friday, January 7,

2005 from 11:00a.m. – 1:00 p.m. at TMA, Conference Room 9-A. This meeting is a follow-up to the data request meeting with HHSC on October 29, 2004.

With no other agenda items, the CHIP Coalition meeting adjourned at 1:20 p.m.