



CHILDREN'S HEALTH COVERAGE COALITION

FORMERLY THE CHIP COALITION

2023 Legislative Priorities

When children have health coverage and can get the preventive and primary care they need, studies show that they not only remain healthier, but also perform better in school, putting them on a path towards academic and economic success. Moreover, when they do get sick or injured, they are less likely to use costlier emergency departments to obtain care more appropriately treated elsewhere. As organizations dedicated to improving children's health, the Children's Health Care Coalition (CHCC) is committed to reducing the number of uninsured children to improve health outcomes for them and their families.

Improve Outreach & Enrollment to Help Eligible Children and Pregnant Women Get and Stay Covered

- HHSC must be fully equipped to prevent loss of Medicaid coverage for eligible children when the COVID-19 continuous eligibility policy expires.
- Reboot the HHSC Community Partner Program and provide grants to community-based organizations that provide application assistance and outreach to hard-to-reach families and regions.
- Eliminate administrative hurdles to get enrolled by implementing Express Lane Eligibility, allowing families to update their address online, improving 211 capabilities, and fully staffing HHSC eligibility workers (HHSC EI #2).
- Fund a robust outreach campaign to families with children who are eligible but not enrolled in Medicaid or CHIP. One of four US citizen children residing in Texas has a parent who is not a US citizen, and parents need help with questions about enrolling their U.S. citizen or lawfully present immigrant children into coverage for which the child is eligible.

Invest in Physician & Provider Rates to Ensure Access to Care for Children and Moms

- Promote efficient use of Medicaid dollars by ensuring patients can timely obtain cost-effective care at the right time and place by improving access to physician, dental, mental, and other health professional services through targeted rate increases for maternal and child health services. (HHSC EI #12)
- Support meaningful pay increases for community attendants who serve our most vulnerable Texans: helping an estimated 300,000 Texans with disabilities—including over 24,000 children—and frail elders on Medicaid to remain in their homes and out of institutions. Attendants are paid as little as \$8.11 per hour, have no sick leave and no health benefits. (HHSC EI #12)
- Improve timely postpartum depression (PPD) interventions by allowing more frequent screenings in the year following delivery. Texas Medicaid currently pays for 1 screening postpartum as part of the child's well-baby visit. However, national specialty societies recommend up to 4 evaluations in the 12 months postpartum because PPD often develops many months following delivery. Additionally, Medicaid PPD screenings should be expanded in neonatal intensive care units, to screen new mothers with premature and/or critically ill newborns.

Enhance Health Coverage and Services for Kids, Moms, and Families

- Support the financial well-being and health of Texas families by extending meaningful health coverage for uninsured, low-wage parents and adults including ensuring women have comprehensive coverage before, during and after pregnancy.
- Promote better birth outcomes for mothers and babies by ensuring women have timely access to needed medical care not only in the year after pregnancy, *but also well before*. Healthy pregnancies do not begin at conception, but in the years prior, by ensuring timely access to contraceptive services to allow women to better time and space pregnancies, promoting preventive care interventions, such as smoking cessation, and ensuring early diagnosis and management of chronic conditions, such as diabetes, which contribute to higher rates of birth defects when untreated before pregnancy. (HHSC EI #5)
- Invest in home intervention programs, such as the Nurse Family Partnership.
- Reduce unintended teen pregnancies – and high-school dropout rates -- by authorizing Texas CHIP to cover contraceptives with parental consent, a benefit covered by 48 other states.
- Fully fund the Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) Program to ensure babies and toddlers with developmental delays and/or disabilities receive the necessary services to thrive. (HHSC EI #11)

Innovate in Medicaid to Meet Families Where the Live, Work, and Play

- Allow school districts to improve access to timely mental health, counseling and other school health services by

leveraging federal Medicaid funds to provide parentally approved services in school to all Medicaid-enrolled students.

- Constrain Medicaid costs by implementing a cohesive strategy to address non-clinical factors that contribute to poor maternal and child health outcomes, including boosting access to nutritious foods and safe housing.

The Children's Health Coverage Coalition (CHCC) is dedicated to ensuring the health and well-being of Texas children and families. The CHC Coalition engages in public education and advocacy, working closely with state agencies and the Texas Legislature on behalf of children and their families.



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