

Texas CHIP Coalition Minutes
Friday, April 18, 2008 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.
May Owen Conference Room, 10th Floor
Texas Medical Association

Attendees: Anne Dunkelberg, CPPP; Laura Guerra-Cardus, Children's Defense Fund; Carrie Kroll, Texas Pediatric Society; Edwin Evans, Seton Health Plan; Stacey Warren, Texas Medical Association; Jodie Smith, Texans Care for Children; Morgan Walthall, March of Dimes; Kevin Denmark, Maximus; Michele Whaling, Maximus; Stacy Pogue, CPPP; Beth Olson, Baptist General Convention of Texas; Celina Pena, MHM; Patti Quinzi, Texas Federation of Teachers; Jennifer Allmon, Texas Catholic Conference; Maria Frederick, Texas Catholic Conference; Robin Butler, Children's Hospital Association of Texas; Candise Spikes, Catholic Health Association of Texas.

Via conference call: Julia Easley, Children's Medical Center; Sarah Hoover, Denton County Health Department

Guests: Ed Walz, Spitfire Strategies; Liz Arjun, Georgetown University Center for Children and Families

Anne Dunkelberg called the meeting to order at 11:05 a.m

Update on Texas Finish Line Campaign

Ms. Dunkelberg introduced Liz Arjun with Georgetown Center for Children and Families and Ed Walz with Spitfire Strategies. Both have been providing consulting services for the Texas Finish Grant. She asked each to say a few words about their involvement with the Finish Line Grant both in Texas and with other states.

- Ms. Arjun – The Georgetown Center for Children and Families is a non-partisan policy research group that is currently providing policy assistance to the state groups involved with the Finish Line Grant. For all of the eight states involved with the grant, each is in a different stage of the project. She has been very impressed with the work Texas has done to change attitudes and with the gains that have been made in enrollment given the political climate.
- Mr. Walz – Spitfire strategies is providing technical assistance to those states involved with the grant and with the Children's Health Coverage Narrative that is also being funded by the Packard Foundation. He noted that the same message framework that was used by Texas for the last session that highlighted the positives of covering kids is being used in the other states involved in the Narrative – Oregon, Utah, Wisconsin, Illinois and Arizona. He added that Texas is starting from a different position given our population and used the example that thanks to the efforts of the Texas CHIP Coalition and other advocacy groups, Texas in the last six months has covered more children than the entire number of uninsured kids in Ohio.

Ms. Dunkelberg reported that the reps from CPPP, CDF and Texans Care for Children spent yesterday meeting with Mr. Walz and Ms. Arjun and came away with some great advice on messaging and a good idea of what is happening with the other states. The question that comes

from the grant is how to marry it with the Texas CHIP Coalition agenda to the extent that it can be combined. She added that it was very important that the members of the coalition know that the agenda for covering all kids is not just the work those involved with the Finish Line grant coalition; every victory is due to broad based support like what is received from the Texas CHIP Coalition members.

TCC Agenda Expansion

Ms. Dunkelberg prefaced the conversation by providing the group with an overview of the iterations of the maternal and child health coalitions through the mid-80's and 90's. In 1997 the group decided to reconstitute and changed its name to the Texas CHIP Coalition in an effort to try and help pass the CHIP bill.

At the request of Bryan Sperry with CHAT, Ms. Dunkelberg would like to begin a conversation with the group about possibly broadening the coalition's stated agenda to include other children's health issues and programs as well as revisit the group's name to make sure it encompasses all that the group does. She added that the agenda of the coalition has always been broader than just CHIP but the questions to ask now are 1) is there interest in revitalizing focus on maternal and perinatal issues, and 2) what scope of health access to address. If there is movement on this, it would also be of interest to renew purposeful dedication to bringing in new allies and re-engaging old ones.

The discussion was then opened for input from the group on the proposed ideas.

- Ms. Walthall stated there was confusion last session on if we are only focused on CHIP or backing Medicaid as well. She likes the idea of having different workgroups with members delegated based on their expertise.
- Ms. Smith added that there is a mismatch between the group's stated scope and its actual scope. The reality of our work is that many are focused on access and quality of care for all kids.
- Ms. Easley agreed the scope needs to include Medicaid but added that the CHIP Coalition has such a recognizable name that even if it doesn't cover the full scope, people know what you are talking about.

Mr. Walz commented that the name does have to reflect what the organization does but it is very important to have a strong brand that is easily recognized like the Texas CHIP Coalition. It will be important as the group moves forward with a name change to find one that can be as easily branded.

Ms. Dunkelberg noted that every session the group develops an agenda that the members of the coalition will promote. Some items are not included in the principles because there is not consensus among the members that it is an item that can be supported. CDF, CPP and Texans Care will be supporting the cover all kids enrollment options but understand that all members of the CHIP Coalition cannot embrace it as fully so perhaps the necessity of separating the agendas due to the grant might make this a good time to change the name.

Ms. Easley said she hoped that the major push next session will be on twelve months continuous eligibility for Medicaid. She questioned if there is also advocacy for higher levels of coverage, how those dynamics will affect the push for Medicaid. Ms. Dunkelberg reported that the enrollment of children above 200% FPL in other states with child coverage expansions has been modest, and that the state cost of a buy-in program with significant family premiums between 200-300% FPL (e.g.,

averaging close to 50% of the cost of coverage) is expected to be quite small relative to the cost of 12 month coverage in children's Medicaid. In addition, new enrollment in those state child health expansion programs has been heaving (55% to 70%) by children below 200% FPL, that is , the eligible but unenrolled population Texas hopes to target.

Mr. Walz stated that there is also tactical value in having an ambitious agenda that is flexible enough that the outcome will be strong even if changes and compromises are made in the Legislative process.

Ms. Quinzi asked what type of partner base our Coalition is interested in creating by changing the name and broadening the scope. Ms. Dunkelberg responded that we are looking to bring more business champions to the table as well as strengthen ties to state contracted CBOs, local children's health coalitions and engagement in areas of the state that are not already participating.

Ms. Dunkelberg asked Ms. Smith with Texans Care for Children to discuss how health care issues are balanced in the multi-facet agenda that Texans Care for Children supports. Ms. Smith stated that she is involved in many other coalitions that also may touch on issues of children's health. Kids are multi-issue beings and many of the issues that affect them feed into each others so it's important that those who do participate in other organizations provide more updates to the group so that work is not being duplicated.

Ms. Dunkelberg re-stated that this will be an ongoing discussion within the meetings. Ms. Walthall, Ms. Guerra-Cardus and Mr. Sperry will form a workgroup for development of a new name, tag line and mission statement and bring before the coalition at a later date for feedback. She added that CPPP will have a policy conference in September and will be addressing other issues during the meeting including prosperity for Texans and the adequacy of revenues to support state government. She commented that as agendas are broadened you have to start talking about how the state can pay for the items you want.

Update on Eligibility Workgroup

Ms. Dunkelberg stated that by creating the eligibility workgroup many of the time intensive issues that had been discussed at the CHIP Coalition meetings have now been moved to the workgroup's agenda. She proposed that the time for the CHIP Coalition meetings in May and June be shortened to one to one and a half hours with the eligibility group meeting promptly at 12:30. This will allow those who wish only to participate in the eligibility and enrollment discussion to have a "time certain" when that discussion will begin. The group can evaluate whether the new timing works well and plan future meetings accordingly.

Other Issues

Ms. Dunkelberg reported that HHSC did submit the 1115 waiver yesterday (04/17/08) and the link to the final paper is available on their website (<http://www.hhs.state.tx.us/medicaid/reform.shtml>). The waiver is mostly aimed at adults at this point, with two exceptions: (1) thee state proposes to blend Medicaid and CHIP funds along with employer contributions in some cases to provide family premiums assistance, and (2) the state purposes to apply the waiver to 19-21 year olds, who are subject to EPSDT requirements under federal Medicaid law.

A policy page was sent out through the CPPP listserv yesterday (04/17/08) on the Medicaid regulations. Ms. Dunkelberg noted that most of the provider groups either at the state or national levels have provided input but not much has been heard from the consumer advocates. She asked that everyone review the information and make recommendations to the Texas Congressional delegation. The policy page e-mailed does not include reference to any of the changes included in August 17th CHIP letter which this administration is also trying to apply to Medicaid regulations.

Family Story Collection

Dr. Guerra-Cardus noted that she still needs stories from families that affected by CHIP eligibility. If any one knows of any in their area to please pass them along to CDF. She is working with Spitfire and Georgetown to develop messaging around opposition that may come up during session.

Ms. Dunkelberg stated that she will e-mail out the principles from the last two sessions, and the Coalition will devote the May or June meeting to developing the principles for the '09 session.

With no other agenda items the CHIP Coalition meeting adjourned at 12:40 p.m.