

Texas CHIP Coalition Minutes
Friday, July 17, 2009 - 11:00-12:00 p.m.
May Owen Conference Room, 10th Floor
Texas Medical Association

Attendees: Jennifer Allmon, *Texas Catholic Conference*; Jana Blasi, *Texas Association of Community Health Centers*; Laura Guerra-Cardus, *Children's Defense Fund*; Anne Dunkelberg, *Center for Public Policy Priorities*; Sister JT Dwyer, *Seton Family of Hospitals*; Kathy Eckstein, *Children's Hospital Association of Texas*; Shannon Foster, *Seton Health Plan*; Laura Guerra-Cardus, *Children's Defense Fund*; Pam Hardin, *Health and Human Services Commission*; Maria Huemmer, *Texas Catholic Conference*; Sonia Lara, *Texas Association of Community Health Centers*; Alison Little, *Texans Care for Children*; Kymberlie Quong Charles, *Center for Public Policy Priorities*; Morgan Sanders, *March of Dimes*; Melissa Shannon, *Center for Public Policy Priorities*.

Via conference call: Alison, *Dallas Regional Chamber of Commerce*; Michella, *Maximus*; Jennifer Banda, *Texas Hospital Association*; Conni Barker, *DePelchin Children's Center*; Julia Easley, *Children's Medical Center of Dallas*.

Ms. Dunkelberg called the meeting to order at 11:04 pm.

Update - Outreach & Technical Assistance Workgroup:

Sister JT Dwyer provided an update on the latest Outreach & Technical Assistance Workgroup, and congratulated HHSC staff for their enthusiasm and attendance, but noted that the grass roots organizations involved in the new workgroup were less involved.

- Barriers Committee – The workgroup has identified five separate barriers that prevent eligible families from becoming enrolled or remaining in the system. The workgroup has established separate subcommittees to address each concern. A brief description of each committee and a progress update is provided below:
 - Barrier 1: Getting the application correct the first time. This group is headed by Kit Abney-Spelce. Sonia Lara & Yvonne Vaughn have worked to develop a draft document to ensure that application assistance workers will have the best information so that applications for eligible applicants will go through the system the first attempt and not generate missing information letters.
 - Barrier 1 sub-group Laura Guerra Cardus heads this group whose original task was to develop a Survey Monkey which would enable us to create a database of all organizations around the state providing application assistance. Those groups would also be asked if they wished to participate in this work group and whether they would like notice when the state makes policy changes on issues related to the eligibility system. This group expects to generate information of challenges that groups that join the data base are experiencing regarding getting applications correctly done and through the system.
 - Barrier 2: Policy & Staffing Levels – Anne Dunkelberg heads this group which is seeking information regarding the current staffing levels and whether the number

of increased staff requested at this legislative session was based on current need or expected future need. These members are thinking critically about projected growth in the enrollment numbers particularly in the context of the slowing economy.

- Data Committee (a subgroup of Barrier 2) – John Berta has been completing an analysis related to consistent problems with the application process to assess whether or not some issues are specific to certain geographical areas or if these issues occur throughout the entire system.
- Barrier 3: This group is working on the issue that there does not seem to be a consistent, reliable and accountable process for retrieving client case information and resolving client problems. There was no update on the progress from this group.
- Barrier 4: This group is looking at inconsistent application of policy. There was no update on the progress from this group.
- Barrier 5: This group will be looking at the complexity of the rules and processes involved with the eligibility system. This group needs input that they will not receive until near the end of the calendar year.

Nicole Saunders and Jim Felkner from the CHIP/Medicaid Communications Office addressed the Outreach & Technical Assistance Workgroup to explain that they were planning to develop a booklet for CBO's and they inquired if our workgroup wanted to work in partnership with them. The group decided against creating another committee to work on the booklet, but committed to the Communications Office any relevant information that came from the work of our various Barrier committees. The workgroup recommended that this new publication be available to all providers of application assistance and not just the state designated CBO's.

Ms Hardin informed the CHIP Coalition members that the next meeting of the workgroup will be August 5th at the Texas Hospital Association.

Texas Infant Health Alliance Update –

Ms Little informed the group that Texans Care for Children tracked 70 bills that affected infant health, of those introduced 10 bills passed. She expressed disappointment with some important bills that did not pass. A bill that would have prevented smoking in all workplaces and public areas, HB 5 by Representative Myra Crownover, failed despite over 85 legislators co-sponsoring the bill. Additionally, legislation that would have mandated that fish vendors post warning information from public agencies about mercury consumption for pregnant women and young children also failed to become law.

Ms Little explained that were a number of legislative successes, some of these include:

- HB 1240 (Rep Villarreal) - requires that all parents who have a baby delivered through the Medicaid program receive a child development and resource guide that includes information in English and Spanish relating to child development, health, and safety from birth until age five.

- HB 1510 (Rep Bonnen) - adds material about preventing Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) to an already-existing information booklet provided to all parents at the time of birth.
- HB 1672 (Rep Crowover) - requires DSHS to add sickle cell newborn screening to existing requirements. The bill also requires DSHS to disclose its usage of genetic material collected during newborn screenings and allows parents the option of having genetic material destroyed. Funding for cystic fibrosis screening was also appropriated in the budget.
- HB 1671 (Rep Crowover) - authorizes DSHS to enter into contracts with other states to ensure continuity of newborn screening services in the event that a disaster affects the state laboratory.
- HB 1795 (Rep Pierson) - “Greyson’s Law” expands the scope of genetic disorders screened for at birth.
- HB 3654 (Rep Marquez) - establishes minimum health care and housing standards for pregnant county jail inmates.
- HB 3653 (Rep Marquez) prohibits the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ), the Texas Youth Commission (TYC), counties, and cities from using restraints on a pregnant inmate while she is in labor. If they must be used, the restraints must be the least restrictive option possible.

Federal CHIP Grants –

Ms Dunkelberg informed the group that the Children’s Health Insurance Program Re-authorization Act (CHIPRA) created a new funding stream for states to improve outreach and retention in the program. She noted that the aim of these funds is to reduce the number of uninsured children that are currently eligible for either CHIP or Medicaid, with a major emphasis on retention. This first round will grant up to \$40 million in two-year projects ranging from \$25,000 to \$1,000,000. Eligible applicants include: state, county, and local governments, community-based or faith-based organizations, schools, and federal safety net providers.

CMS will administer the grants and expects awarding about 200 grants in the round, and Ms Dunkelberg understood that there may be additional rounds of funding cycles. Ms Dunkelberg explained that CBO’s that submit an application must have the support from the state agencies to ensure that the data collection and tracking provisions of the grant are met.

Ms Blasi from Community & Migrant Health Centers said their organization had contacted the department when they found out because this is critical. She explained that her organization was not planning on applying, but they are working to put together a proposal with a coalition to cover a 50 county area along the boarder, and include some areas in the Panhandle. Their proposal targets children in mixed immigrant families, migrant workers and those who are least likely to be covered in CHIP or Medicaid, despite being eligible.

Dr. Guerra-Cardus explained that Children’s Defense Fund has been exploring ways of getting this connected with the school and the family resource centers based in some school districts to expand coverage for children eligible for CHIP or Medicaid. Dr. Guerra-Cardus reported that CDF have already been in contact with school districts in the Rio Grande Valley, San Antonio,

Corpus Christi, El Paso and Ft Worth to implement a 100% coverage model. She noted that her organization will not apply but want to serve as convening role. Dr. Guerra-Cardus said that CDF was looking get a fiscal agent involved to help with reporting outcomes.

Ms Dunkelberg asked any group planning to apply for funds to keep the Outreach and Technical Assistance Workgroup aware of their efforts for moving forward.

More information about the CMS grants can be found at:

<http://ccf.georgetown.edu/index/cms-filesystem-action?file=ccf%20publications/federal%20schip%20policy/outreach%20grants%20final.pdf>

With no other business the meeting ended at 12:02 pm.