

## **Texas Update - August 2006**

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### **New Features Added to [www.CHIPmedicaid.org](http://www.CHIPmedicaid.org)**

As part of its recent increased outreach campaign to get children enrolled in health coverage, HHSC developed [www.CHIPmedicaid.org](http://www.CHIPmedicaid.org) to provide an easy way for families to get up to date enrollment information. The Commission has recently updated the site with some useful documents for providers and families alike. These new materials can be found in the client area of the website, as opposed to the area dedicated to information for community based organizations.

- [A list of CHIP health plans searchable by county](#)
- [A list of CHIP/Children's Medicaid pharmacies searchable by name, address or city](#)
- [New charts reflecting 6 month enrollment fees and co-payments for brand name drugs, generic drugs and doctor's office visits](#)
- [A list of community-based organizations sortable by county, city or name](#) (scroll to the bottom of the page to find the link)

Please share these links with your clients, outstationed eligibility workers, and other staff to make them aware of the new resources.

### **"Outside Regular Business Hours" - What Those Words Will Soon Mean for FQHCs and RHCs**

SB 1188 required that Managed Care Organizations (MCOs) reimburse FQHCs and RHCs for services provided to Medicaid clients "outside regular business hours" even if the client does not have a referral from his or her PCP. HHSC has now approved the definition of "outside regular business hours" in this context:

Outside Regular Business Hours - - As applied to FQHCs and RHCs, means before 8 a.m. and after 5 p.m. Monday through Friday, weekends, and federal holidays.

This rule will be effective September 1, 2006. The process for submitting claims to TMHP under this rule is still not clear, however. Both HHSC and TMHP staff are looking into this issue. We will inform you of the claims process under this rule as soon as we have the information.

**Online Prior Authorization Functionality Coming Summer 2006 for Medicaid Providers: *Electronic signatures NOT accepted.***

Texas Medicaid is moving into the 21<sup>st</sup> century - almost. Texas Medicaid and Healthcare Partnership (TMHP), the state's Medicaid third party administrator, announced in a recent update that they are developing a new process, in addition to the traditional phone, fax, and paper methods, where providers can submit prior authorization requirements through secure pages on the TMHP website. Online prior authorization can do a great deal to ease paperwork burdens on Medicaid providers. However, TMHP still requires *original signatures* on all prior authorization forms and documents because Texas Medicaid does not accept electronic signatures. This means providers must print out a form from the website, sign it, and mail it in to TMHP. Still, online prior authorization is a step in the right direction toward easing the paper work burden on providers.

**HHSC Releases Findings from a Survey of Katrina Evacuees in Texas**

HHSC contracted with The Gallup Organization to conduct a comprehensive survey of the Katrina evacuees who remain in Texas to assess their current situations and needs for state services. According to the findings, 251,000 Katrina evacuees remain in Texas. Most of them reside in the three major metropolitan areas of the state: Houston, Dallas-Fort Worth, and the I-35 Corridor between San Antonio and Austin. The Houston area claims the most evacuees: 111,000, compared to an estimated 66,000 evacuees in Dallas-Fort Worth and 62,000 in central Texas. The large region stretching from El Paso to Corpus Christi is the current home of an estimated 12,000 evacuees. Many evacuees report diminished health status since the hurricane; they also report less utilization of Medicaid and CHIP since before Katrina hit.

You can find the HHSC news release about the survey here:

[http://www.hhs.state.tx.us/news/release/082206\\_Survey\\_Katrina.shtml](http://www.hhs.state.tx.us/news/release/082206_Survey_Katrina.shtml)

For a link to the survey report, go to:

[http://www.hhsc.state.tx.us/survey/KATRINA\\_0806\\_FinalReport.PDF](http://www.hhsc.state.tx.us/survey/KATRINA_0806_FinalReport.PDF)

Given that many evacuees report that they plan to stay in Texas, you may find useful data in this document about new residents to your community as you plan for the future of your health center.

**DSHS Launches a New Pertussis Prevention Campaign**

The Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) is beginning a pertussis education campaign today (Aug. 21) in the face of an increasing number of cases of the serious bacterial illness. State contractors working on the project have contacted TACHC about getting new outreach materials to community health centers. We will keep you posted on this campaign and how you can educate your clients.

The campaign will provide information about new vaccines to protect older children and adults against pertussis, also known as whooping cough, and serve to remind parents of

the critical importance of having their children complete the vaccine series at the recommended ages. The all-time low number of cases in Texas was 36 cases recorded in 1976. But last year DSHS reported more than 2,000 cases of pertussis with nine deaths. Eight of those who died were infants.

The English/Spanish campaign, which lasts six weeks, targets areas of the state with high rates of pertussis, including Dallas/Fort Worth, Austin, San Antonio, Houston, Waco/Killeen/Bryan, El Paso, Amarillo and the Rio Grande Valley.

**TACHC Annual Meeting is Approaching: October 14-18, 2006**

Be sure to check out [www.tachc.org](http://www.tachc.org) for more information about Annual Conference, being held this year at the Westin Galleria Hotel in Houston. A draft agenda and registration forms are available on line.

**Don't forget to ask your friends to join the advocacy network!**

Click here to register as a community health center advocate:

<http://votervoice.net/groups/tachc/?registeronly=true>