

Texas Update – December 2005

Just in time for the holidays, a quick update on some of the Texas developments important to community health centers...

HURRICANE UPDATE

Last month the Health and Human Services Commission made a presentation to the Senate Finance Committee regarding disaster relief in Texas and the impact on Texas health and human services infrastructure. While the state has begun some preliminary estimations, it remains to be seen how these disasters will affect the overall budget and Medicaid caseloads for the remainder of the biennium. Here are some of the highlights of the presentation:

Costs:

Across all health and human service agencies, HHSC projects a total of over \$767 million in all funds to be expended in FY 06 as a result of Hurricane Katrina alone. This number includes roughly \$318 million in Katrina Medicaid Waiver (Acute Care) costs. The chart below gives more cost data for both Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

Total Hurricane Costs – HHS System

	September 05 (expended)		October 05 (projected)		FY 2006 (projected)	
	GR	All Funds	GR	All Funds	GR	All Funds
Katrina	\$1,204,199	\$6,288,890	\$292,779	\$7,086,899	\$121,061,224	\$767,203,126
Rita	\$1,280,124	\$2,330,983	\$6,111,783	\$23,495,948	\$24,587,640	\$98,725,305

Enrollment:

As of October 21, Medicaid has enrolled over 9000 Katrina evacuees. 56% of these Medicaid enrollees are children under 19. Another 34.9% of enrollees are low income parents of children under 19. These Medicaid waiver data are only preliminary as services became available on November 1.

TACHC TESTIFIES BEFORE HOUSE PUBLIC HEALTH

On December 14, José Camacho testified before the House Public Health Committee about the FQHC experience during the hurricane relief efforts. Along with recommendations to improve the state emergency response efforts by formally including FQHCs in the emergency management plan, José presented the results of CHC reports to TACHC and HRSA of the numbers of Katrina and Rita patients you have served: **Since the storms hit, Texas CHCs have provided over 23,000 visits to Katrina evacuees and almost 3,000 visits to patients affected by Rita, above your already considerable patient loads.** Thanks to all of you who stepped up to the great need in your communities!

PCCM EXPANSION

1) **SB 1188 provision**

In our Legislative Update in June, TACHC reported to you about a provision in SB 1188 that was to protect FQHCs and RHCs from loss of revenue for patients they served outside of regular business hours by ensuring that they would be reimbursed for those services no matter what form of managed care environment they may be operating in. The intent of this provision was to ensure FQHCs and RHCs are reimbursed for after hours care regardless of whether the FQHC or RHC was able to obtain a referral from the patient's primary care provider (PCP).

While HHSC has implemented this measure in HMO areas with the new contract provision going into effect September 2006, they had not considered that the provision would apply to PCCM until TACHC raised questions about how this provision was to be implemented in those areas. HHSC legal services is currently reviewing the law for its applicability, and TACHC is working with legislators to secure letters of legislative intent that this provision will apply in PCCM areas. Our goal is to reduce administrative burden and ensure reimbursement for all services you provide.

In the meantime, **be sure to secure all necessary referrals** when seeing patients with PCPs other than your center. If the PCP is unreachable or refuses to provide a referral, you can call Texas Medicaid and Healthcare Partnership directly at **888-834-7226** to receive an **administrative referral**.

If the patient indicates that he or she would like to switch to you as their PCP, you can help them do this by dialing the **TMHP client hotline number (888-304-5468)** and handing the phone to the patient to make the switch or you can print a PCP change form from the TMHP website and have them fill the paperwork out there. PCP changes forms must be mailed because they require an original signature. You can find the PCP change form at this link:

[http://www.tmhp.com/File%20Library/File%20Library/PCCM/Client/PCCM%20PCP%20Selection%20Form%20\(English\).pdf](http://www.tmhp.com/File%20Library/File%20Library/PCCM/Client/PCCM%20PCP%20Selection%20Form%20(English).pdf)

2) **PCCM Directory**

HHSC has assured TACHC that the December issue of the PCCM directory will list FQHCs under each specialty for which they provide services. They will not, at this point, be able to list each doctor's name with the FQHCs where they work; HHSC reports that the system changes required for the change would be too costly at this point. One cost HHSC has in this area is maintaining an accurate list of providers. Please help ease this burden by keeping your provider information up to date with TMHP. Our cooperation in this matter may be the first step toward getting doctor names listed in the directory.

CHIP

After months of reporting that CHIP dental benefits will begin “sometime in early 2006,” HHSC has finally decided on a date: **CHIP dental benefits are scheduled to go into effect April 1, 2006.** TACHC will keep you informed of any administrative changes associated with the implementation of this benefit.

We reported in our last update that HHSC will be revising the Children’s Medicaid and CHIP application. HHSC is now distributing a draft of this application which is attached. The end product will contain HHSC’s logo instead of TexCare’s. HHSC reports the new application should be available sometime in January.

WOMEN’S HEALTH WAIVER

On December Monday December 12, Jose emailed to members a draft of the women’s health waiver application from HHSC. Comments are due to the state by this Friday, December 23. **HHSC has included TACHC and Texas FQHCS as an important part of their proposed program, highlighting FQHCs as resources in the state where waiver eligible women can receive family planning services along with comprehensive primary, preventive, and follow-up care.** TACHC has provided a letter of support for the state to signal our intent to work closely with them to develop an effective Medicaid women’s health demonstration project. If you would like another copy of the draft waiver proposal, please contact Katie at the TACHC office - 512-329-5959.

TACHC wishes all of you a safe holiday season.

Best wishes in 2006!