

Texas Update – December 2009

Happy Holidays!

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National Health Reform Status and Advocacy Resources

As many news outlets are making clear, the health reform debate is proceeding quickly in the U.S. Senate this week. Senators are working toward a vote for final passage of their version of the bill by Christmas Eve – Thursday December 24. **Please remain on the lookout for action alerts from NACHC** regarding health center provisions in the Senate version of the health reform bill, and **prepare to respond quickly!** Amanda Pears from NACHC sent an advocacy request yesterday, December 21, so please respond by **calling your Senators ASAP and ask them to Vote YES on Health Reform!** **You can call your Senators Toll-Free by using the NACHC Advocacy Hotline at 1-866-456-3949.** Keep an eye out for further details and advocacy requests, keeping in mind that it will be important for ALL Senators to hear from health center advocates on this issue, regardless of their stated position on health reform.

In the meantime, NACHC has developed some advocacy resources that you can use to educate your boards, staffs, and patients. Click [HERE](#) for fact sheets, glossaries, and other tools that are written with these different audiences in mind. Print these materials, make them available, and please encourage all who are involved with your health center to get involved in health reform advocacy.

HHSC Soliciting Proposals for Medicaid Pilot Projects

Early next year, HHSC will be soliciting proposals for pilot projects focusing on comprehensive health home models for children enrolled in Medicaid under the age of 21. HHSC is interested in pilot projects that use new and creative approaches to patient access, quality improvement, patient/family centeredness, coordinated care, and team-based approaches to care among other topics. The attachment provides the details for the pilot project. Eligible respondents will serve a minimum of 5,000 Medicaid children each year. Smaller projects will be encouraged to partner with other local organizations meet the 5,000 patient requirement. The Request for Proposals (RFP) will be announced on the HHSC Business Opportunities website in

early 2010. See: http://www.hhsc.state.tx.us/about_hhsc/BusOpp/BO_home.shtml. Pilot projects will begin operating by the spring or summer of 2010. The RFP will include detailed definitions and examples of the core components. Be sure to keep an eye out for this funding opportunity as FQHCs may be uniquely positioned to apply for these funds.

HB 2154 Update – New Physician Education Loan Repayment Program Online Application Available in January

With new rules approved in October 2009, the Department of State Health Services (DSHS) Primary Care Office is working with the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to begin implementation of the new Physician Education Loan Repayment program that received significantly advanced funding in the 2009 Texas Legislative Session.

DSHS expects to have an **online application available** for doctors to participate in the new program in **January 2010**. They have set a tentative deadline of April for application submissions and expect the service period to begin in July. Stay tuned to TACHC and DSHS for more details as they become final.

Congratulations to the Texas FIP Grantees!

With only 85 projects funded across the country, congratulations are in order for Texas's FIVE health centers who received Facility Improvement Project grants funded through the federal stimulus package. Brownsville Community Health Center (Brownsville), Project Vida Health Center (El Paso), Su Clinica Familiar (Harlingen), El Centro del Barrio (San Antonio) and Heart of Texas Community Health Center (Waco) all received significant awards intended to support construction and renovation projects or help centers adopt electronic health record or health information technology systems.

Community-Based Obesity Prevention Request for Proposal - Proposals Due January 8, 2010

The Department of State Health Services (DSHS) Family and Community Health Services Division; Nutrition, Physical Activity & Obesity Prevention Program; and Office of Border Health; announce the expected availability of State Fiscal Years (FY) 2010 and 2011 Title V, Obesity Prevention, and Border Health funding to support community initiatives that have shown promise in the prevention of obesity. Approximately \$2,600,000 is expected to be available to fund up to twelve (12) contracts in Texas communities. Out of the total funded contracts, up to three (3) of the contracts will be limited to respondents representing border communities. Respondents may apply for up to \$150,000 for Infrastructure-Focused with Some Implementation (IFSI) projects, and up to \$300,000 for Basic Implementation (BI) projects. For more information, contact Vonda White at Vonda.white@dshs.state.tx.us.

Follow the link below for **FULL** grant instructions:

http://esbd.cpa.state.tx.us/bid_show.cfm?bidid=86153

New PCCM Outreach Effort Aims to Increase Timely Checkups

For those centers participating in Medicaid Primary Care Case Management (PCCM), this program is working to boost the number of children getting timely Texas Health Steps checkups. Each month, PCCM is polling its Texas Health Steps providers to compile a list of available checkup slots. Call center agents then dial families with children new to PCCM as well as those with children who are due for a Texas Health Steps checkup. During the call, staff offer help setting up a checkup—scheduling the appointment on the spot with one of the existing openings, in some cases, setting up a three-way call with the child’s parent and the child’s Texas Health Steps doctor to schedule the appointment. The statewide outreach effort is similar to what other Medicaid managed care organizations are doing in smaller service areas. Please make your front line staff aware to expect these calls.

Nurse-Family Partnership Expands

With funding from the Texas Legislature, HHSC’s Nurse-Family Partnership program is expanding. The fledgling program pairs registered nurses with low-income women who are pregnant for the first time. The relationship is designed to improve prenatal care and the mother’s quality of parenting. The program is voluntary and free to the mother and her family. Currently, the Nurse-Family Partnership has capacity to serve 1,800 families in 11 areas of Texas including three sites in Houston, two in Dallas, two in San Antonio and one site each in Lubbock, Tarrant County, Port Arthur and Austin. HHSC is looking to expand the program to serve an additional 200 families. **A request for proposal is expected before the end of the year with new capacity in place by mid-2010.**

Make a New Year’s Resolution to Recruit More Advocates! Ask them to [CLICK HERE](#) to register as advocates.