

Texas Update – January 2006

Katrina Medicaid Waiver Applications Must be Submitted by January 31!

For those of you who are still seeing any Katrina evacuees in your centers, HHSC will accept Katrina Medicaid Waiver applications through January 31. After that point, patients who want Medicaid must apply as Texas residents and go through the regular application process. The usual Medicaid eligibility requirements and benefits will apply.

CHIP Dental

The CHIP Dental program is still scheduled for an **April 1 start date**. So far, HHSC has contracted with 300 dental providers, but hopes to increase that number to between 6000 and 9000 before the program begins.

Delta Dental is the primary contractor for the Texas CHIP dental benefit. **To provide this benefit to your clients, you must sign up in Delta Dental's provider network.** Here is their contact information:

Delta Dental
Customer Service Department
PO Box 537010
Sacramento, CA 95853-7010

Fax: (866) 828-4122

Provider Toll Free Number: (866) 561-5891

Member Toll Free Number: (866) 561-5892

Website: <http://www.deltadentalca.org/tchip/index.html>

HHSC is using a value based purchasing contract model for the CHIP dental benefits. This means that HHSC will be holding health plans and contractors more accountable. In the past, HHSC has made corrective actions to contracts that are not performing. Now, the state will be moving directly to liquidation of assets if performance goals are not met. To ensure that all contractors understand the new requirements, HHSC will be working closely throughout the next year to clearly communicate their new expectations.

The New Integrated Eligibility and Enrollment (IEE) System Begins Rolling Out This Month

As you all are hearing, the new IEE system will consist of a variety of ways for clients to apply for benefits. These include:

- In person applications at a benefits office (Monday – Friday, 8am – 5pm)
- By phone by dialing 2-1-1 (Monday – Friday, 8am – 8pm)

- Over the Internet (24 hours a day, 7 days a week)
- By fax or mail

The various elements of the new system will become available to clients at different times in different areas of the state. For instance, starting **January 20**, clients in the Austin area will be able to apply for benefits over the phone using 2-1-1 and on the internet using the new website www.yourtexasbenefits.com. New areas will have access to these resources according to the schedule below. There are still many questions, however, such as can clients applying by phone in areas not yet part of the rollout still check the status of their application online? When the website goes live on the 20th, will it be available statewide, and if not, how will they control who has access? As we get more information, we will keep you informed.

The IEE program promises to be an **interesting and challenging change process**. As with any big change, there are and will be problems. Community based organizations are reporting that some families new and renewal applications are falling through the cracks in the transition of vendors from ACS to the Texas Access Alliance (TAA). HHSC has assured that they are working to correct any problems.

During the transition, clients can still call the old TexCare number, 1-800-647-6558 to apply for and check the status of their benefits. HHSC is **planning outreach and education presentations** across the state as well. The next ones are scheduled for **January 20**, 3pm at the Region 20 Education Service Center, **San Antonio** and **January 25**, 3pm at the Marriot at Hobby Airport, **Houston**.

Also, **hot off the presses**, HHSC announced this Friday the 13th that the **final call center** for state benefits will be located in **Athens, Texas**, near Dallas. The other three call centers are located in Austin, San Antonio, and Midland.

The **timeline** for the new system rollout is as follows:

January 2006:	Austin area (TIERS pilot)
April 2006:	San Antonio and Hill Country
May 2006:	Midland, Tyler, east/west rural areas
June 2006:	Houston area
July 2006:	North Central, Southeast Central areas
August 2006:	Dallas/Fort Worth area
September 2006:	El Paso, Panhandle, and north border
October 2006:	Rio Grande Valley

For a map of the counties related to each rollout phase, please follow this link:

http://www.hhs.state.tx.us/consolidation/IE/Projected_RolloutSchedule.shtml

HHSC is Making Efforts to Better Communicate With Stakeholders

HHSC has updated its newsletter for the new year. The new In Touch newsletter will be a bi-monthly publication that you can receive over email. To sign up to receive the newsletter, follow this link:

<http://www.hhsc.state.tx.us/stakeholder/index.html>

HHSC will also continue a bi-monthly forum held in Austin to update stakeholders on various programs and issues. If you aren't able to travel to Austin for these forums, you can now call in and log on to hear presentations from the last forum the most recent forum. The January 9th forum will be webcast on January 30th from 2-4. To sign up for the Jan. 30 HHSC web/audio stakeholder forum, e-mail hhscexternalrelations@hhsc.state.tx.us. You can also follow the link above and read "HHSC 'In Touch' Through Technology" to find out how to sign up. The webcasts will be limited to the first 99 registrants.

Women's Health Waiver – Update

As the Update reported last time, the state's Women's Health Waiver application has been submitted and is currently under review at CMS. While there had been some confusion on the age range for women qualifying for the waiver, HHSC recently confirmed that the demonstration project will cover women ages 18-44, not 18-64, for family planning services. With the lower age range in place, the waiver program will NOT cover mammograms as part of its benefit package. As always, we will keep you posted on the waiver negotiation process with CMS as we hear more.

Breast and Cervical Cancer Control (BCCC) Program

While not a new Medicaid program for the state, we wanted to re-alert you all to another, often underutilized women's health initiative that could benefit women in your communities diagnosed with breast and cervical cancer. Eligible populations include:

For breast cancer services: Income at or below 200% FPL; no other source of payment; women age 50-64 are a priority

For cervical cancer services: Income at or below 200% FPL; no other source of payment; women age 18-64 who have never or rarely (not within the previous five years) been screened for cervical cancer are a priority

Please note: In this program, women must receive these low or no cost breast and cervical cancer screening and diagnostic services from a DSHS funded BCCC provider/contractor. Many FQHCs are in this group and are already providing this service to their communities. TACHC hopes to work with partners in the coming year to expand the definition of eligible providers to all those in the state who diagnose women for these diseases. This change could make it much easier for women to access needed services.

To see BCCC provider locations in your communities for the breast and cervical cancer control program, click here:

<http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/bcccs/locator.shtm>