

Texas Update – June 2008

For those of you who missed the April and May Updates, I was out on maternity leave... but I'm back!

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The Latest in Texas Medicaid Reform

In mid-April of this year, Texas submitted its full 1115 waiver application for Medicaid reform to the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). This program creates a new Health Opportunity Pool (HOP) to provide subsidies to low income, uninsured populations to buy coverage in the private market. The state revised its proposal from its December 2007 concept paper submission. Key updates include:

- Revisions of target populations and benefits. In year one of the project (State fiscal year 2009), the state proposes covering children under 200% FPL not eligible for Medicaid, Medicare, or CHIP with CHIP benefits.
- Low income parents and childless adults eligible for subsidies to buy employer-based or other private insurance in year three.
- Proposed \$75 million in grant funds for the first three years of the project to develop coverage options and enhance local health care programs that alleviate uncompensated care. Health centers and other non profit programs would be eligible for these funds if grant funds are approved by CMS.

HHSC is now in negotiations with CMS to work out the program details and funding strategies and there are no guarantees as to what the final program will actually look like. TACHC remains concerned that the state requested to waive cost based reimbursement for FQHCs, and continues to meet with state staff about ways the program can best utilize FQHCs while reimbursing us fairly for the additional services we can provide to program beneficiaries. Click [here](#) to read the waiver application.

Migrant Care Network

In order to assist migrant families maintain health coverage and access health care services while traveling out-of-state, TACHC is spearheading a new initiative known as the [Texas Migrant Care Network](#). (MCN) It includes enrolling both in- and out-of-state clinicians and Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC) in the Texas Medicaid Program to provide access to preventative care, primary care,

specialty care, hospitals, dental services, mental health services and pharmacy services. The Texas Migrant Care Network approach is no different from an HMO that covers out-of-state care under certain circumstances. Essentially, all out-of-state services furnished to farmworker members signed up with the Texas MCN would be classified as in-state services, and would save considerable money by assuring that children are provided services while traveling out-of-state with their families. The Migrant Care Network is not an expansion of benefits, but is a way to help migrant families maintain their existing coverage while they travel out-of-state for agriculture work. TACHC is currently working with HHSC to hammer out the various details concerning provider enrollment, outreach to families, and other logistics. Stay tuned for more on this exciting project, and click [here](#) to learn more.

Texas Finish Line Campaign

The Texas Finish Line Campaign has kicked off to ensure that every child in Texas has access to affordable, comprehensive health insurance. This campaign is the extension of the Insure Texas Kids Campaign that successfully advocated restoring the CHIP program almost back to 2003 levels, most importantly extending the eligibility period from six to twelve continuous months. The Finish Line Campaign will work actively to enroll all eligible children into CHIP and Children's Medicaid by eliminating the bureaucratic roadblocks that prevent them from accessing coverage such as a poorly functioning eligibility system and a complicated enrollment process. TACHC will be working with and supporting these initiatives through the upcoming State Legislative Session, and we look forward to your participation and support. Learn more about the campaign at www.texaskidswin.org.

Community Health Vote

NACHC has kicked off a new initiative to encourage voter engagement at community health centers: Community Health Vote. Because health centers have immense credibility and trust among the people you serve, your center is an ideal place to encourage voter participation among your clients, who are often underrepresented in the electoral process. Your position in the community provides you with the power to be the catalyst for a dramatic increase in voter participation through legal, permissible, nonpartisan voter engagement activities: voter registration, voter education, and get-out-the-vote. Click [here](#) for a list of Dos and Don'ts for health centers involved in the election cycle.

Health center week (August 10-16, 2008) is a perfect time to encourage voter registration at your health center. There may be resources available to help you do this. For more information contact [Katie Coburn](#) or [Yvette Ammerman](#) at NACHC and stay tuned for more information from TACHC in the coming weeks.

National Health Center Week – August 10-16!

Health Center Week is just around the corner and it's time to start inviting your elected officials to come out for a tour. Health center week is the perfect opportunity to showcase the good work you do at your health center and build relationships with your local and national elected officials – particularly important as the 2009 Texas Legislative Session is coming in a few short months. Click [here](#) to find out who represents your health center – and remember to plug in each one of your sites! Your sites often fall in multiple electoral districts. See the list of Dos and Don'ts for inviting elected officials to your health

center. If there are multiple candidates for office in your district, be sure to invite them all! As always, be sure to visit www.healthcenterweek.com for information, tools, and resources.

Also, keep an eye out next month for media tool kits that we'll be distributing as part of TACHC's new Earned Media Campaign...

Please forward this message to others who would like to receive updates and participate as community health center advocates. Click [HERE](#) to register.