

Texas Update - November 2006

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

Time to Contact Your Local Media and Legislative Representatives to Spread the Word about Community Health Centers!

This year's November 7 elections brought changes. As NACHC's reported in its update (and you likely saw for yourself in the news), Democrats have taken back control of the US Congress.

While not as dramatic, the Texas legislature saw some change as well with five Democrats picking up seats in the Texas House. Republicans still hold a strong majority in that body, as well as in the Texas Senate.

This change in party control brings about additional responsibilities for us as advocates to educate our new (and returning) representatives about the good work of Community Health Centers. NACHC has posted several useful post-election media tools including draft letters to the editor and sample introductory letters to your elected representatives. You can download the media tools including templates for letters to the editor and letters to members of Congress (and the Texas Legislature) from NACHC's advocacy website by clicking [here](#) - *With the Texas Legislature going into session on January 9, it's important to lay the groundwork NOW to bolster support for CHCs in Texas.*

Texas Legislature already filing bills....

Speaking of the Texas Legislature, pre-filing for the 2007 session began on November 13 and lawmakers have quickly begun filing legislation to be considered next spring. Community Health Centers are watching a variety of developments, including bills on Medicaid reform, addressing the health provider shortage, indigent health care, and immigration - specifically immigration bills that limit public benefits. Throughout the session, the Texas Update will be sending out bill analyses and keeping you abreast of developments affecting Community Health Centers at the Texas Legislature - *STAY TUNED!* We will certainly be counting on each of you to contact your representatives at crucial points for Community Health Centers during the session.

Texas CHIP Coalition and the Insure Texas Kids Campaign

Many of you may be familiar with the Texas CHIP Coalition, an organization of a variety of groups around the state dedicated to strengthening Children's Medicaid and CHIP programs in Texas. Before each legislative session the Coalition circulates a set of

principles relating to child health coverage to which state and local organizations sign on. To see the CHIP Coalition's detailed principles for the 80th Legislature, click [here](#).

The Texas CHIP Coalition is partnering with the Insure Texas Kids Campaign to advance their principles by offering specific legislative actions to lawmakers. The Insure Texas Kids Campaign is being spearheaded by the Children's Defense Fund of Texas. The two organizations messages are coordinated. Both groups' key principles are:

The Texas CHIP Coalition and the Insure Texas Kids Campaign urge the following plan of action for the 80th Texas Legislature:

- Cut the number of uninsured Texas kids in half by enrolling every eligible child in CHIP and Medicaid
- Implement 12 months continuous eligibility for CHIP and Children's Medicaid
- Eliminate bureaucratic roadblocks to encourage personal responsibility and help low income families achieve self-sufficiency:
- Fix problems with the Integrated Eligibility System to prevent eligible kids from losing coverage
- Eliminate the CHIP asset test
- Eliminate the CHIP 90 day waiting period for uninsured children
- Deduct childcare and child support expenses when calculating income for CHIP
- Provide adequate reimbursement for Medicaid and CHIP providers
- Invest in outreach and education to ensure that all eligible children get the care that they need

TACHC has signed on to the Coalition's principles and the Campaign's action steps. We invite each of your organizations to also sign on to support children's health care in the state. If you want to add your organization's name to these lists, email Anne Dunkelburg at dunkelburg@cphp.org.

Women's Health Program (Medicaid Waiver) Update

Still no word from CMS on approval for this program, but, as far as we know, HHSC still plans to begin accepting applications January 2, 2007. During the week of December 4, HHSC and the Center for Health Training will be holding training sessions on this program for providers around the state. Be sure to get your providers and other women's health staff out to these training sessions. The training announcement and registration form are attached.

Dates and Locations for Regional Women's Health Program Training:

12/05/06 - Austin, TX - *Austin Marriott at The Capitol*

701 East 11th Street, 10:00 am - 3:30 pm

1-888-855-7741

12/07/06 - Houston, TX - *Hilton at Hobby Airport*

8181 Airport Blvd., 10:00 am - 3:30 pm

1-713-645-1409 or 1-800-Hiltons

12/08/06 - South Padre Island, TX - *The Sheraton*
310 Padre Blvd., 10:00 am - 3:30 pm
1-800-222-4010

12/12/06 - Dallas, TX - *The Doubletree at Market Center*
4099 Valley View Lane, 10:00 am - 3:30 pm
1-972-385-9000

12/14/06 - Lubbock, TX - *Holiday Inn and Towers*
801 Avenue Q, 10:00

As a side note, for those of you who aren't familiar with them, the Center for Health Training is a great resource for women's health information. They contract with DSHS for family planning training on a regular basis and have an informative website with news about available training, workshops, and online tutorials:

www.centerforhealthtraining.org

CHIP Perinatal Program Update

The CHIP Perinatal Program will begin accepting applications on January 2, 2007. CHIP Perinatal provides prenatal care to unborn children of pregnant women with household income up to 200 percent of the federal poverty level (FPL) and who are not eligible for Medicaid. Once born, the child will receive benefits that are similar to traditional CHIP benefits for the duration of the 12-month coverage period.

Unlike the Women's Health Program, CHIP Perinatal is a program written into HMO contracts. This means that the HMOs are responsible for outreach, coordinating any provider training, and client education. As of now, there is no scheduled state-sponsored, regional training such as there is for the Women's Health Program. HHSC has not released an application form for the program yet, although we're hoping to see one in early December. The most information we have regarding this program is posted on DSHS's maternal and child health website: <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/mch/>. At this link you'll find contact information for HMOs operating this program around the state - be sure to contact them soon to get enrolled as a CHIP Perinatal provider and find out what resources they have for you.... And let TACHC know what you're finding out!

Forward this message to your friends and colleagues, and ask them to sign up with the advocacy network....

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