

Texas Update – November 2009

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New Policy in PCCM: Requirement of PCP Referral Number for Unassigned Patients

In an effort to enforce the medical home concept, the Primary Care Case Management program, or PCCM, is instituting a new billing requirement for FQHCs and RHCs who see patients that are not assigned to them. Effective March 1, 2010, FQHCs and RHCs must include the TPI of the client's primary care provider (PCP) on the claim form. This requirement applies to services that are not considered "self-referred services" such as family planning, THSteps, or case management. If the PCP provider number is not submitted, the claim will deny and "MANAGED CARE INVALID REFERRING PROVIDER" will appear on the Remittance & Status report.

Currently in state law, FQHCs and RHCs are not required to obtain a PCP referral number for unassigned patients they see after hours. This new policy should not affect current billing practice for care provided to patients after 5:00 pm and on weekends. Additionally, clients will retain the right to choose or change their PCP by calling the TMHP 1-800 number. Please let TACHC know if you anticipate any major problems with this new policy.

Medicaid Women's Health Program Results

The Medicaid Women's Health Program, or WHP, providing an annual gynecological exam and 12 months of birth control to US citizen women under 185% of poverty has been operating in Texas since January 2007. HHSC recently released results data for the first year of the program. In the first year, the fertility rate for eligible women was **41 births per 1000 women**, down from **172 births per 1000 women** in 2003. For **Hispanic women**, the drop in birth rate was even more pronounced: a rate of **49 births per 1,000 women** compared with **194 births per 1,000 women** in 2003.

The program also appears to **improve birth spacing** for WHP participants. For program participants, 48% of births to women who had a prior Medicaid birth were 24 to 59 months after the prior birth. Of those women in the comparison group (similar women not receiving WHP services), only 39% of their births were at least two years after the prior birth.

Fewer pregnancies also mean fewer Medicaid paid births. According to HHSC's methodology, the WHP averted 7,700 births in the first year. As a result, **Medicaid costs** for pregnancy, prenatal care, delivery,

and infant care were **reduced by \$78.2 million**. WHP expenditures in the first year were approximately 12% of the estimated savings due to births averted.

Health centers, as key providers of WHP services to Texas women, were and are critical to the continued success of this program.

Become a 2010 Census Partner

Ensuring the patients of your service area are counted in the national census is essential to your funding and that of entities to which you refer patients. As an organization that provides vital services to your community, you are a trusted voice with a unique connection to the people you serve. Consider partnering with the Census Bureau and help ensure that everyone has a voice in this vital count. The goal of the Census Bureau's partnership program is to combine the strengths of state, local, and tribal governments, community-based organizations, faith-based organizations, schools, media, businesses and others to ensure an accurate 2010 Census. These governmental and private sector businesses and organizations know their local conditions and circumstances better than the Census Bureau and have the connections in the local community to encourage and mobilize participation in the census. You can learn more about how to become a Census Partner at the [2010 Census Partners website](#). Here in Texas, the Austin-based [Center for Public Policy Priorities](#) is acting as a Census Partner and is encouraging other organizations to do the same.

Chris Traylor to Lead Department of Aging and Disability Services

Health and Human Services Executive Commissioner Thomas Suehs announced this month that Chris Traylor, who has led the state's Medicaid program for the past three years, will be the next commissioner of the Department of Aging and Disability Services (DADS). DADS provides a comprehensive array of services for older Texans and individuals with disabilities. The agency has almost 18,000 employees statewide and an annual budget of \$6.8 billion. Its duties include regulating long-term services and nursing homes and operating state supported living centers for people with profound developmental disabilities. Traylor's appointment was made with the approval of Gov. Rick Perry and is effective Jan. 1. Community Health Centers have worked closely with Chris Traylor in his role as associate commissioner for Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program at the Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) since 2006. Traylor also has served as chief of staff at HHSC and as the director of HHSC's Transformation Program Management Office, where he managed the day-to-day operations of the consolidation of Texas health and human services agencies in 2004. He previously served as deputy commissioner for government relations at the Texas Department of Human Services and is a graduate of Texas Tech University.

HHSC Taking New Steps to Improve the Still Struggling Eligibility System

As the Update reported last month, the Texas eligibility system remains at a crisis point, and application processing timeliness is still not much improved. HHSC was given permission in October to hire 250 new

eligibility workers. All these new staff are focused on reducing the backlog of applications that is requiring employees to work mandatory overtime. The state still struggles with training new employees and getting them up to speed on complicated policy so they can process applications correctly and on time. Along with hiring new workers, HHSC is working to ease some policies and processes to help applications move through more quickly. Additionally, Commissioner Suehs is working to improve morale among workers by offering merit bonuses and a Commissioner's Challenge where Commissioner Suehs himself will cook lunch for the most improved eligibility offices in the state. HHSC hopes to have removed the application backlog by next February.

Health Centers in the News - Brownsville Community Health Center Breaks Ground on New Building

Check out [TACHC's news page](#) for a link to a Brownsville Herald story about the ground breaking on their new state of the art clinic facility. Congratulations Brownsville CHC!

(If you have health center news you want included in the update, be sure to [email me](#) that information!)

As always, please forward this message and ask others to [JOIN as Community Health Center Advocates.](#)