

Texas Update - October 2006

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

New Study Finds Roughly 75% of Children Dropped from STAR Medicaid or CHIP in 2006 Remain Uninsured

HHSC released a report this month prepared by the Institute for Child Health Policy that presents the results of telephone surveys conducted with families enrolled or formerly enrolled in Medicaid Managed Care (STAR) and CHIP. Researchers conducted 1,800 telephone surveys of families who had either completed or not completed CHIP and Children's Medicaid renewals during 2006, the time during which Texas Access Alliance took over Integrated Eligibility and Enrollment. The study found that a substantial number of families who did not renew their children's coverage were missing information in their renewal packets. Among these families, **40% of CHIP families and 76% of STAR families were not informed by the contractor that their application lacked required information.** Only 24% of children who had been covered in Medicaid and 28% of children who had been in CHIP had health insurance at the time of the interview. The new study highlights the seriousness of the problems HHSC and Texas Access Alliance must address to ensure appropriate access to children's health coverage in the state. For a copy of the full report, click here:

http://www.hhsc.state.tx.us/CHIP/reports/092206_STARCHIP_Report.html

Health and Human Services Budgets In Development for the 2007 Legislative Session

In preparation for the 80th legislature, now just over two months away, state agencies have developed draft budgets, or "legislative appropriations requests," for the 2008-2009 biennium. These documents help form the legislature's "baseline" budget from which they start all funding negotiations. The legislature directed agencies to assume a 10% cut to their budgets as they drafted their initial finance requests. Ultimately, the assumption of the 10% cut means that agencies must justify requests for level, not to mention additional, program funding during the legislative session. With some exceptions, agencies applied the 10% cut to all programs across the board.

Some legislative appropriations requests you know about:

- The Health and Human Services Commission, the agency that administers Medicaid, assumed that Medicaid costs in 07 and 08 would stay the same as in

- 2006, despite the reality of inflation in the health care markets. They do assume, however, that Medicaid *caseloads* will grow.
- The Department of State Health Services applied the 10% cut to both the Primary Health Care Program and the FQHC Incubator program.

Click on these links to get more information for the HHSC and DSHS legislative appropriations requests. Remember, these documents are the *starting point* for state budget negotiations. We will have much work to do to ensure that programs that support the health care safety net are fully funded.

<http://www.hhsc.state.tx.us/LAR-2008-2009/index.html> - HHSC Legislative

Appropriations Request

<http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/budget/lar/default.shtm> - DSHS Legislative Appropriations Request

Texas STILL Waiting for CMS Approval of the Women's Health Medicaid Waiver

According to Melanie Bush at HHSC, Texas has *still* not heard from CMS on whether the new Women's Health Medicaid Waiver, to be known in the state as the Women's Health Program (WHP), has been approved. In the meantime, Texas is putting systems in place to implement the program by January 1, 2007. The WHP will provide women age 18-44, under 185% of poverty, and who are US citizens access to an annual family planning exam, screening for certain chronic diseases, family planning counseling and education, and all forms of contraception except emergency contraception. The eligibility period is for 12 continuous months. The federal government provides 90% of the cost to provide services in the WHP. CMS has made clear that the point of this program must be the prevention of pregnancy only and has not approved Texas' requests for a more comprehensive women's health program.

Some aspects of the Women's Health Program that FQHCs should keep in mind:

- Benefits are *limited* - the WHP will not cover treatment for any conditions discovered in the annual family planning exam.
- DSHS officials have not yet determined how Title V, X, and XX funds will interact with this new Medicaid program. They have announced that they will grant extensions for V, X, and XX contracts in FY 07 and have a non-competing continuation application for these funds in FY 08.
- Providers are responsible for providing and collecting the simplified one page WHP application, as well as income and citizenship documentation from eligible women and faxing the information to dedicated WHP eligibility workers. Right now, outstationed eligibility workers will not be allowed to certify these women eligible onsite. TACHC is working with the state to get this policy changed.

TACHC will be providing detailed information on this program as more details become available. If you have any specific questions, please feel free to call Katie Coburn or Jana Blasi at the TACHC office, 512-329-5959.

State Awards \$3.5 Million in New Outreach Grants- Two FQHCs Among the Recipients!

Earlier this month, the Health and Human Services Commission announced "tentative" awards to 21 community based organizations (CBOs) to help families enroll in CHIP, Medicaid, and other services. Centro de Salud Familiar La Fe in El Paso and Community Action Corporation of South Texas in Alice were among the recipients. Congratulations!! The grants for CBOs come in addition to a \$3 million media campaign to alert eligible families to benefits in CHIP and Children's Medicaid.

TACHC Releases Policy Paper on the Cost Effectiveness of Outstationed Eligibility Workers

At this year's annual conference, TACHC released a policy paper showing the cost effectiveness of having an outstationed eligibility worker in your health center. Not only to these state workers ease the eligibility process for your clients, they provide the health with a more secure source of Medicaid revenue. You can read more in the attached document.

Please Forward to Friends And Colleagues - Ask Them to Click Below to Register as a Community Health Center Advocate.

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