

NATIONAL NEWS

STATE BUDGETS AND MEDICAID

Medicaid covered over 60.5 million people in 2007, including over 29.5 million children, according to the Center for Children and Families May 2008 report on **Medicaid and State Budgets: Looking at the Facts**. Medicaid is the largest source of healthcare coverage in the United States. The majority of costs for elderly, disabled and 50% of all nursing home care is financed by Medicaid.

Medicaid's impact on state budgets is often misunderstood by state legislators. It is important to distinguish between total spending, which includes federal dollars, and state spending. The positive impact of the federal share of Medicaid funds on the ability of a state to finance other priorities is also not clearly understood.

The National Association of State Budget Officers (NASBO) shows how states spend their funds and the various ways Medicaid can impact state budgets. It is important to define whether these numbers are the total expenditures or state general fund and federal dollars.

Misunderstandings by state legislators of Medicaid's impact on state budgets and priorities can provide less than positive discussions about the value of Medicaid. Misleading information can lead legislators to make decisions that can be harmful to Medicaid's ability to provide necessary healthcare for the uninsured and underserved. For more information on this topic, see the report on the Center for Children and Families, Georgetown University, Health Policy Institute website at <http://ccf.georgetown.edu>.



WHAT'S UP WITH THE NETWORK

Membership Recruitment: The membership committee is seeing results from their recruitment efforts with representation by over 143 individuals and 76 organizations in the network. The committee is reaching out to Community Health Center, Inc., and Neighborhood Plan of Rhode Island and to America's Promise Alliance grantees and Kids Count organizations.

The committee has already exceeded their goal of 30 states by July 1, 2008. The NCKF Network is much stronger with the diversity of representation we have nationwide. Starting July 1, 2008, the NCKF Network will implement annual mem-

bership dues. Current network members will receive packets in the mail in early June for membership dues.

The dues are a demonstration of our individual and collective commitment to the continuation of the NCKF network. We hope you will continue to support the NCKF Network through your dues and participation in its initiatives. The NCKF network is an exciting opportunity to build on our past successes and become a national voice for quality health and healthcare for all.

If you have any questions about the dues structure when you receive the packet, please call the contact number given. Return your membership dues as soon as possible to help support our efforts.

WHAT'S UP WITH THE NETWORK (Continued)

Save the Date: Covering Kids & Families of Indiana, Inc. has been selected to host the Midwestern regional convening for the NCKF network. **Topic:** *"Health Care + Education= Healthy Communities: Why Schools Fit the Equation"*. **Dates:** July 23-24 **Location:** Marriott Indianapolis Downtown. **Highlights:** National, Regional, and State Focus. **More Information:** Visit www.ckfindiana.org. Look for more updates and information on travel scholarships soon.

National Teleconference: Please join the National Teleconference on June 24th from 12:00 to 1:30pm (Pacific), 2:00-3:30pm (Central), 3:00-4:30pm (Eastern). The Teleconference will focus on state coverage efforts in current fiscal and policy environments. Speakers include Donna Cohen Ross from the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, Judy Arnold with the New York Department of Health, and NCKF Network members from multiple states who will share their perspectives and efforts to cover the uninsured. RSVP to Michelle Wood at michelle@chc-inc.org to participate in the call.

Leadership Committee: The Leadership Committee met at the end of May to review last year's strategic plan and look ahead to the NCKF Network's future. Outcomes from the meeting included: (1) Further defining the NCKF Network's national niche; (2) Building a sustainability plan, including voting to have CHC continue as administrative lead; (3) Strengthening SCHIP reauthorization strategy; and (4) Improving operating practices by streamlining the committee process and bolstering the Leadership Committee's teamwork to guide the NCKF network.



MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: *GEORGIA FAMILY CONNECTION PARTNERSHIP*

Georgia Family Connection Partnership (GaFCP) is a public/private organization that works to improve conditions for Georgia's children and families. GaFCP connects local, regional, and state partners, and provides data and research to educate them about child and family well-being so they can make informed decisions.

GaFCP also supports a statewide network of 159 county collaborative organizations. These collaboratives bring together human service providers; family, community, education and business leaders; faith and civic-based organizations; local elected officials; and concerned citizens to address the challenges children and families face in their communities. The Partnership works with collaboratives to develop strategic plans that set goals and measure their improvement over time. Their goals focus on children being healthy, ready for and succeeding in school; stable, self-sufficient families; and strong communities.

GaFCP recently participated in a joint grant with *Voices for Georgia's Children* to develop a tool to provide a consistent, concise message that health coverage solutions do exist for the more than 300,000 uninsured children in Georgia. Part of that tool is a video these organizations produced to create awareness

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Want to be a Member Spotlight? If you are looking for an opportunity to recognize one of your staff or to highlight a solution or resource for Network members, please forward your information by the third Thursday of the month to: Amy Ellrod: aellrod@nhhealthykids.com

about the uninsured population in Georgia. This compelling video features Georgia families sharing their stories, along with healthcare providers and local leaders who advocate for children's health coverage.

Linda Lunsford, GaFCP's liaison with the Department of Community Health on Medicaid and PeachCare stresses the importance of advocating for children's health coverage. *"Collaborating with organizations across the state has allowed us to strengthen our advocacy messaging for issues in line with our mission statement,"* she said. *"These partnerships have given Georgia Family Connection Partnership the opportunity to create appealing, strong messages and tools, such as the video, to reach a broader audience."*

For more information about *Georgia Family Connection Partnership* and to watch the video, visit www.gafcp.org.



COMMITTEES

Advocacy/Policy : For those who want to get involved in advocacy activities around SCHIP and Medicaid rule changes, this is the committee to join! Contact Diane Ragbeer of the Children's Trust in Florida at diana@thechildrenstrust.org.

Communications: If you have creative talent and would like to write articles for the monthly newsletter, we are looking for writers and readers. Contact Nancy Whitman, Nevada CKF, at nwhitman@healthinsight.org

Education: Conference planners and educators, join this committee! If you have a knack for planning educa-

tional teleconferences, contact David Roos of CKF Indiana at droos@ckfindiana.org or Anne Joseph of Covering Kentucky Kids and Families at annejoseph@earthlink.net.

Membership: This committee is moving and shaking and increasing our membership. If you like talking to people, here is your chance. Contact Barbara Luksch with Hawaii Covering Kids at coverkids@aol.com.

RESOURCES

The Building Blocks of Health Reform: Achieving Universal Coverage and Health System Savings. A Health Reform proposal developed by Commonwealth Fund researchers. View the report at www.commonwealthfund.org.

Maximizing Enrollment for Kids Call for Proposals released by RWJF. For more details, see <http://www.rwjf.org/applications/solicited/cfp.jsp?ID=20362&c=EMC-FA132>.

America's Promise Alliance has invited the fifty cities with the highest concentration of low-performing high schools and all states to hold dropout prevention summits during the next two years. The events will drive policy and program action to help strengthen schools and provide wraparound support to young people. They would like to include health insurance outreach and enrollment as an integral component of each drop out prevention summit. NCKF Network members are encouraged to participate.

For more information and to find an event near you, please visit: <http://www.americaspromise.org/APAPage.aspx?id=9172> .

Credits: Nancy Whitman, Nevada Covering Kids and Families; Amy Ellrod, New Hampshire Healthy Kids; Diana Cook, Wyoming Department of Health/SCHIP; Caroline Rivas, Community Health Councils/California CKF. Edited by: Janice Taylor, Community Health Councils.