

NATIONAL NEWS

MEDICAID & SCHIP UPDATES

Precarious Position: States Must Balance Declining Revenues with a Growing Need for Medicaid. Families USA's recent issue brief outlines the impact declining state revenues are having on Medicaid benefits across the country. This includes the costs to states when Medicaid benefits are cut, which shifts the burden onto safety net providers and hospitals. A study that examined the cuts made to the Oregon Health Plan Medicaid program in 2003 indicated that over 50,000 individuals being kicked off the plan. Oregon hospitals' uncompensated care costs rose by \$253 million over a two-year period. The Families USA report underscores the need for federal assistance to provide fiscal relief to states. When FMAP (Federal Medical Assistance Percentage) was increased temporarily in 2003, states received \$10 billion in federal funding. Fortunately, there is encouraging news from DC: the US House of Representatives is working on a second economic stimulus package that would include an increase in FMAP, potentially up to 3%.



SCHIP Reauthorization. Last year, Congress failed to reauthorize the State Children's Health Insurance Program as scheduled and merely extended the program until March 2009. As a result, the SCHIP program is now slated to expire on March 31, 2009. Swift action by Congress in early 2009 to address the "unfinished" business of SCHIP reauthorization will be critical to provide states with the financial certainty necessary to operate their programs. As Congress goes into recess in August, many are utilizing the opportunity to educate their representatives about the numerous success stories from children enrolled in SCHIP and the potential risk if a strong and early SCHIP reauthorization is not forthcoming in 2009.

CMS August 17th SCHIP Directive. Recent efforts to overturn the August 17, 2007 Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) SCHIP Directive included two vehicles, both in the Senate. A Resolution of Disapproval was introduced by Senator Rockefeller that challenged the Directive on procedural grounds as a violation of the Congressional Review Act. Unfortunately, the Resolution was not considered for mark-up to move forward. Another vehicle is a possible legislative attempt to overturn the August 17th Directive in a second appropriations supplemental bill. Movement for the appropriations bill has stalled in Congress, and it is not clear whether it will be taken up in the fall. The only other potential vehicle would be a SCHIP reauthorization bill in the fall, but it is unclear whether policymakers will address this after August recess.

Both GAO and CRS have said that the Administration violated the law in issuing the August 17th letter. If we fail to overturn this Directive, we are allowing an illegal policy that harms children to remain in effect indefinitely. As with the Medicaid regulations, CMS should not be allowed to undermine the authority of Congress or the statutory requirements for public rulemaking. Hundreds of thousands of children could become uninsured. Some states are subject to the August 17th requirements now, but all states covering children above 250% gross income, will have to fulfill the requirements as of this August.

WHAT'S UP WITH THE NETWORK

MEMBERS PLEASE STAND UP!

Members Rock!



- What does it mean to be a member?
- What are the benefits?
- What opportunities exist for participation, sharing of information and resources?
- What is the role of my organization?

The NCKF Network is distinguished from other national organizations by a membership that has “its feet on the ground.” The vision of the Network is to be a national voice for high quality health and healthcare for all, with organizations and individuals committed to advancing healthcare coverage and equal access. This can only be accomplished through the active participation of our members.

The Network was intentionally organized to facilitate a membership-driven organization with some financial support through dues and funding for operations and activities. To this end, we rely on volunteers with expertise in expansion, outreach, simplification, advocacy and coordination of healthcare coverage to participate and contribute to the Network’s goals via the committees and other activities.

The Operating Principles outline organizational and individual membership roles as:

- Participating and advising on the overall operation, coordination and effectiveness of the Network
- Supporting and participating in Network activities on a regular basis
- Participating in one of the sub-committees
- Sharing resources & information with members and others to advance the Network’s objectives
- Providing or receiving resources to the Network
- Working with the Network on common agendas.

Thus far, members have volunteered their time and resources to the four established committees plus the leadership committee and have taken on responsibilities such as chairing or co-chairing committees, sharing resources, advising, and crafting materials. Our hope is that more of our members will STAND UP by participating and contributing their expertise to support our continued efforts to grow the Network into a strong national voice and resource for other national and local organizations. In return, members have the opportunity to participate in regional and national meetings, teleconferences, resource and information sharing, and electronic networking.

We’ve made tremendous strides in establishing the Network and building on our experience with CKF coalitions. It takes everyone’s participation to create and grow a movement! So remember, YOU are what drives our vision, mission and activities. And, we need you to make it happen. Check out page 3 to learn how to get involved in a committee. Feel free to contact the committee chairs or Catherine Sepulveda (Catherine@chc-inc.org) at Community Health Councils for more information.

It takes each of us to make a difference for all of us.

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: *SOUTHERN NCKF REGIONAL CONVENING ~ SAVE THE DATE*

SAVE THE DATE: SEPTEMBER 30TH and OCTOBER 1ST in NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA.

Agenda for Children has been selected to host the Southern regional convening for the NCKF Network. **Location:** French Quarter, New Orleans, Louisiana. **Highlights:** National, Regional, and State focus.

More Information: Contact Derrick Edmond at dedmond@agendaforchildren.org. Look for more updates and information on agenda, travel scholarships, etc. soon.

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

COMMITTEES *SIGN UP TODAY!*

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 educational 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



Get Ready for Back to School! Invite your Congressional representative to Back to School events to educate and demonstrate the success of the SCHIP program and meet families! Planning guides and communications team staff are available to help. Visit www.covertheuninsured.com.

Center for Lobbying in the Public Interest (CLPI): New Principles and Practices for Public Interest Lobbying. As nonprofits increasingly realize their role and participate in advocacy, CLPI developed standards and best practices for policy initiatives. For a copy of the report and benchmarking tool, visit www.clpi.org/SEPP.aspx.

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.