

# NATIONAL NEWS

## PUBLIC BENEFIT MODERNIZATION: WHAT ARE THE ISSUES?

The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities held a conference in Washington, D.C. on September 23rd and 24th to raise awareness of the issues related to modernization of public benefit programs and their enrollment processes. As states consider conducting business in new ways to increase outreach, enrollment and retention program administrators and community advocates will need to discern ways to provide an array of access points and possibilities to a range of individuals. The conference covered issues related to websites, on-line enrollment, call centers, federal regulations, waivers, data tracking and much more.

There are lessons to be learned from other states with modernization implementation in place or in progress. The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities is embarking on the education of advocates as well as program administrators going forward about advocacy issues and modernization issues and needs of consumers and public benefit programs. Some of the issues to consider if your state is already embarking on these discussions are:

- Federal rules that apply to applications and renewal processes
- Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act
- Section 255 of the Communications Act
- Waivers for face to face interviews vs. telephonic interviews and electronic signatures
- Use of telecommuting of staff
- Call centers
- Policy and procedural options to increase efficiency
- Front end and back end processing of applications and processes
- User friendly websites, on-line applications at appropriate grade level
- Utilization of pre-screening tools for eligibility (on-line)
- Data tracking and reporting

Modernization of public benefit programs is complex and a very large undertaking. The consensus from the conference is for states to take a slow approach to each and every change to modernization with input from stakeholders, consumers and public benefit program staff. For more information see the resource section of this newsletter for links to other sources of information and programs with modernization in place.

## WHAT'S UP WITH THE NETWORK

### *OUR NEW MEMBERS ROCK!*

Please welcome our newest members:

- Gulf Coast Teaching Family Services: [www.gctfs.org/](http://www.gctfs.org/)
- Voices for Ohio's Children: [www.vfc-oh.org](http://www.vfc-oh.org)



### *Save the Dates:*

**NCKF Network Annual Meeting** ~ January 27 and 28, 2009 in Washington D.C. in conjunction with the Families USA Health Action conference held January 29–31, 2009. Stay tuned for more information. If interested in joining the planning committee, please contact CHC to volunteer.

**National Teleconference** ~ October 29, 2008 (12:00 - 1:30 pm Pacific, 2:00 - 3:30 Central, 3:00 - 4:30 pm Eastern) **TOPIC:** Emerging Promising Strategies to Improve Retention in Medicaid and SCHIP **RSVP:** Please email Michelle Wood @ [michelle@chc-inc.org](mailto:michelle@chc-inc.org) to join the teleconference.

### *Regional Meetings: Bulletin Report*

#### **School Health Initiatives Midwestern Regional Conference**

Guest Writer: Sondra Gardetto

##### Health Care and Education focus of Inaugural Midwestern Regional Conference

Over 140 participants from 15 states and Washington, D.C. attended in the first-ever School Health Initiatives Midwestern Regional Conference July 23-24 in Indianapolis, coordinated by NCKFN member, Covering Kids & Families of Indiana (CKF-IN). The event, **Health Care + Education = Healthy Communities: Why Schools Fit the Equation**, spotlighted local, regional and national speakers, including the National Governor's Association, the National Assembly on School-Based Health Care (NASBHC), the American School Health Association, the National Association of Community Health Centers, the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development and the National Alliance for Medicaid in Education. The keynote address delivered by Ms. Kate Keller, NASBHC Board member and Senior Program Officer for the Health Foundation of Greater Cincinnati, set the stage for the conference's focus on the importance of building collaborative partnerships between health care and education and the positive impact school health programs and centers have on children, their families and the communities. For more information or to view the conference agenda and presentations, please visit the CKF-IN website at: <http://www.ckfindiana.org/news/ckf-in/midwestern-regional-conference>.

HEAR ABOUT THE SOUTHERN NCKF REGIONAL CONVENING ~ TEAMWORK DESTINED FOR SUCCESS  
IN THE NOVEMBER NEWSLETTER!

## MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: *CHILDREN'S DEFENSE FUND TEXAS ~ 100% CAMPAIGN*



Texas is home to 1.5 million children who do not have health insurance. It is estimated that 22 percent of Houston Independent School District (HISD) students are not insured.

The 100% Campaign Goal: *Link all uninsured students in HISD with affordable health coverage and reduce emergency room costs to local hospitals and property taxpayers.* Children's Defense Fund's 100% Campaign works to identify uninsured students in HISD through school enrollment forms – completed annually – which now include a question about the medical insurance status of enrolling students. Parents and other guardians of uninsured students can receive help and information from 100% Campaign staff about applying for health coverage for their children through CHIP or Children's Medicaid – two affordable programs that are helping millions of children to get to see the doctor. Uninsured students who do not qualify for CHIP or Children's Medicaid are also connected to the Harris County Hospital District Financial Assistance Program (Gold Card) and other low-cost community and school-based clinics. Children's Defense Fund's 100% Campaign also educates families to understand how to renew their children's health coverage and to learn to utilize preventive care or to call 24-hr nurse hotlines, before seeking care in the emergency room.

Some of their successes this past year include:

- Identified more than 17,000 uninsured students out of 156,2999 students across 221 targeted schools
- Since August 2007, CHIP enrollment has grown by 176,000 children
- Harris County CHIP enrollment increased by more than 33,700 children
- District-wide collaboration with school officials at all levels embracing the campaign goals and partnering with CDF to launch PSA's and deliver automated phone calls to families about insuring their children.

To learn more about their efforts, visit <http://www.cdf-texas.org/schooloutreach.php> or contact Kelli King Jackson at [kkingjackson@childrensdefense.org](mailto:kkingjackson@childrensdefense.org)

**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](mailto:aellrod@nhhealthykids.com)

## COMMITTEES *SIGN UP TODAY!*

**Advocacy/Policy :** Contact Diane Ragbeer of the Children's Trust in Florida at [diana@thechildrenstrust.org](mailto:diana@thechildrenstrust.org).

**Communications:** Contact Nancy Whitman with Nevada CKF via e-mail at [nwhitman@healthinsight.org](mailto:nwhitman@healthinsight.org).

**Education:** Contact David Roos of CKF Indiana at [droos@ckfindiana.org](mailto:droos@ckfindiana.org) or Anne Joseph of Covering Kentucky Kids and Families at [annejoseph@earthlink.net](mailto:annejoseph@earthlink.net).

**Membership:** Contact Barbara Luksch with Hawaii Covering Kids at [coverkids@aol.com](mailto:coverkids@aol.com).

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**Web accessibility standards and regulatory compliance issues:** <http://www.friendsofed.com/web-accessibility>.

**U.S. Department of Justice:** "ADA Best Practices Toolkit for State and Local Governments" section of websites at: <http://ada.gov/pccatoolkit/char5toolkit.htm>

**On-line application links:**  
<http://myflorida.com/accessflorida/>  
<https://access.wisconsin.gov/>  
<https://trn.access.wisconsin.gov/>

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