Attendees: Rosemary Blackmon, Alabama Hospital Association; Jim Carnes, Alabama Arise; Tim King, Alabama Child Caring Foundation; Wendy Dixon – Flamand, Alabama Department of Public Health – Office of Minority Health; Susan Colburn, Children’s Rehabilitation Services/Family Voices; Sharon Parker, Alabama Medicaid; Fern Shinbaum, CHIP; Knoxye Williams, CHIP; Cathy Caldwell, CHIP; Bonnie Bradley, CHIP; Ava Rozelle, CHIP; Anna Blair, Alabama Arise; John Pickens, Alabama Appleseed; Ashley Parker, Alabama Department of Human Resources; Sonya Bumpers, M-Power Ministries; Sharis LeMay, Alabama Department of Public Health – Healthy Childcare Alabama; Vaughn Branch, Alabama Appleseed; Gretel Felton, Alabama Medicaid; Lee Rawlerson, Alabama Medicaid; Steve LaFrieneier, Alabama Department of Mental Health; Alice Widgeon, Alabama Department of Mental Health; Connie Arnwine, Jefferson County Department of Health; Linda Hamilton, Headstart; Ashley Peyer, CHIP; Linda Lee, Alabama Pediatric Association, Laura Caudell, Children’s Hospital of Alabama

Call to Order/Welcome:
Jim Carnes called the meeting to order and welcomed the group. Introductions were made.

Minutes were approved with no corrections.

Reports

Executive Committee – Jim Carnes - Jim noted the committee met last month and had reviewed various reports and updates on the insuring programs. He noted the Coalition as a whole would be discussing these activities during the meeting.

Project Reports

Legislative Update – Anna Blair – Blair distributed a summary of the legislation involving healthcare issues that have been introduced in either the house or the senate during the session thus far. The status of each bill was also noted. She briefly reviewed the handout and in particular noted those bills related to access to care issues. She also noted that one of the bills would require hospitals with financial assistance plans to disclose those programs publicly.

Stimulus Package – Jim Carnes – Jim distributed a brief summary of the impact the Stimulus money will have on Alabama. Chris Sanders, a policy analyst with Alabama Arise prepared the review. There was some discussion about how agencies are working
to draw down those funds that are available. Money will be available over a 27 month period.

**Gaps Profile/Coverage Grant** – Jim Carnes – Jim stated that they continue to work on assessing the underserved in Alabama through the River Region 2020 Project. One of the things they are looking into is the scope and cost of indigent care. Individual hospitals and other providers have looked at this issue, but this would be comprehensive.

**AVAA** – Ava Rozelle – As noted previously, the pilot continues in Lawrence, Blount and Jefferson Counties. Mobile and Baldwin counties will go online later. We continue to receive positive feedback. In general, Medicaid workers have also been very supportive. She did noted there has been some reluctance for people to use the computer, but in general everything is going well.

**Maximizing Enrollment for Kids Grant (PEAK)** – Gretel Felton – ALL Kids and Medicaid have been awarded a Robert Wood Johnson grant. Gretel noted that the grant is in full swing with monthly calls with the other state grantees. There will be a site visit on June 3rd and 4th. Again, this initial phase is purely diagnostic. She reviewed some of the proposals we included in our grant application including moving toward a paperless system, expanding AVAA locations and developing on-line renewal.

**Kid Check** – Tim King – Tim noted the project continues to grow with approximately 25 school systems and 50 schools involved. The biggest challenge is recruiting Nursing Schools to provide the actual screenings to the schools. There was discussion that other entities such as EMT could be used to provide the screenings. As a reminder, a schedule of events is available at [www.alabamaruralaction.com](http://www.alabamaruralaction.com). Regional CHIP staff attend and support Kid Check events as appropriate. Sharis noted that the Department of Education has developed a standardized electronic health record for all schools to utilize for their students. One of the advantages to this would be the ability to transfer records when children move between schools. Another possible impact would be the ability to pinpoint systems and schools with a high rate of uninsured students.

**Local Projects:**

**Jefferson** – Bonnie Bradley - The Jefferson County Coalition did not meet this quarter. Coalition members did support an event organized and sponsored by St. Vincent’s Hospital for Cover the Uninsured Week. The event was very successful. There is still a plan to coordinate with the Health Action Access to Care Workgroup and combine efforts.

**Mobile Project** – Ashley Peyer – The Coalition met on April 21, 2009. Mobile United received some funding that they will use to prepare hurricane preparation guides/coloring books. These will be in English, Spanish and Vietnamese. The booklets will offer suggestions on preparing for a hurricane as well as how to deal with the aftermath of this type of disaster. A CAKF ad will be on the back of the booklet. She also noted the
Coalition will be working with the Mobile Bay Bears again this year. Plans are also underway to support an event planned by the University of South Alabama and USA College of Medicine which will be held in October.

**Insuring Partners**

**Medicaid – Sharon Parker – Provided in Written Report for the period ending March 31, 2009.**

- SOBRA Cases – 203,552
- SOBRA Recipients – 423,283
- MLIF Cases – 22,805
- MLIF Recipients – 61,886
- Plan First – (women with no children) – 14,772
- Average Cases per worker – 1,258
- Average Recipients per worker – 2,695

Gretel noted that Medicaid will no longer require an interview of applicants if all supporting documentation is received. This policy has already been instituted statewide. She also noted that Medicaid has started forwarding mail. This change has resulted in a decrease in returned mail. Medicaid will be disregarding the $250 that will be received by some Social Security recipients as part of the stimulus package as well as the additional $25 that will be received through unemployment compensation. Medicaid now has available Long-term Care Partnership Policies. This would protect individuals from losing their assets when they become ill and need long term care. This policy would cover in home services as well as services in nursing homes and assisted living. Existing policies can be converted to these partnership policies and reciprocity is being offered if individuals have policies from other states. More information is available on the Medicaid website.

Sharon noted that Birmingham now has the only fully functional Medicaid Resource Center. Five out stationed workers have been moved to the resource room. The Center has a large computer room available for applicants to use. Medicaid remains under a hiring freeze, they do have some vacancies and are working to maintain adequate coverage. Lee noted that there has been a 4500 increase in each of the last 2 months in SOBRA Medicaid enrollees. There has also been an increase in MLIF recipients.

**ALL Kids – Cathy Caldwell**

Current enrollment for ALL Kids is 70,061. Although enrollment is down, the number of applications received has increased.

CHIP Reauthorization or CHIPRA went into effect on April 1st. ALL Kids is continuing to review the legislation and is participating in frequent conference calls with the National Academy for State Health Policy. Some of the topics recently discussed included Express Lane Eligibility and Bonus payments. She noted that getting guidance from CMS has been difficult because some staff are not yet in place at that level.
Citizenship and Identity requirements have been added to CHIP, but the process has been simplified. An additional part of the legislation has been that Federally Qualified Health Centers and Rural Health Centers will be reimbursed on a cost based system which is the model that Medicaid uses. ALL Kids has been told on a recent call that guidance about outreach grants should be received in the early summer. Other issues addressed in the legislation include outreach to Native Americans as well as Mental Health Parity.

ALL Kids is also working with the Governor’s office on the Camellia II project.

Cathy noted that there was not a lot in the stimulus package that will directly impact CHIP. She did state it should be positive for the Department as there will be an enhanced Medicaid match rate. There was some discussion about prenatal care for pregnant women versus care for the unborn. To be able to adopt this expansion additional dollars would be required as well as political support.

Bonnie briefly reviewed the increase in the number of Rapid Response Events Regional ALL Kids Staff have been involved with thus far this year. From January through May 21, 2009 there have been 42 layoff notices resulting in 6220 persons laid off. 1635 of those are from Bruno’s/Foodworld stores. These lay offs would occur if a buyer for that company is not found. This compares with only 23 notices during the same period last year and 4438 people.

Knoxye noted that in the last 2 ½ months 42,000 applications have been distributed. She noted that much of the focus of outreach messages is moving toward “Staying Enrolled”.

**Alabama Child Caring Foundation – Tim King**

The approximate enrollment is 7670 with about 2000 on the waiting list and a 6 to 7 month wait.

Tim noted that in 2007, donations were at 2.4 million, in 2008 it was 2.1 million and thus far in 2009 donations are down $124,000 already. In general, BC/BS is having some economic issues as companies close or decrease their workforces and no longer need group coverage. BC/BS is offering early retirement to employees. Individual coverage plans are selling a lot.

Tim did note that ACCF did sell 1600 car tags and is receiving ongoing checks from this effort. Additionally, The Community Foundation of South Alabama has already donated $80,000. ACCF has been informed that they can expect up to $120,000 in total donations from the Foundation. He also let everyone know about the Birdies for Charity program through the Regions Classic Golf Tournament. This is a way to earn additional monies from this event.

**Discussion – Jim Carnes – Future Direction of the Coalition**
Jim noted that several years ago when the RWJ grant ended, the Coalition’s Executive Committee had a retreat to determine priorities for the group. He noted that he wanted the group to discuss how to make the Coalition “worthwhile” as well as discussing the future role we might play.

Some of the comments made by attendees included:

- It is valuable to get together to get up to date information from programs.
- It is a good networking and connection opportunity.
- Other groups and systems should be made aware of the type of information that is shared by the Coalition.
- Could the Coalition have a role in what is happening at the Federal Level. Legislators need to hear from people like us about health care?
- Would it be a good idea to include Congressional Representatives on the Coalition. (Blair noted she could contact a staff member from Congressman Bobby Bright’s office and ask her to join.)
- We should take the opportunity to educate on access to care issues.
- We can continue to “do what we’re doing” but be poised to set priorities and most pressing concerns at some point.

The decision was made to distribute the discussion questions to the group and ask for further input. Additionally, it was decided that the Coalition may schedule some conference calls to further discuss these issues.

Meeting was adjourned.

Next Meeting: July 23, 2009 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. – Location to be announced.

HANDOUTS:
Medicaid Written Report
Minutes from the February 19, Coalition Meeting
Medicaid, ALL Kids, ACCF three program sheet
ALL Kids Regional Map and Important Updates
Topics for Discussion
Stimulus Package Review from Arise
2009 Healthcare – related Legislative Update – April 23, 2009
Minority Health Events