

Covering Alabama's Kids and Families Statewide Coalition Meeting
RSA Tower – ADPH Board Room
Montgomery, Alabama
July 28, 2011
10:00 – 12:00

Attendees: Jim Carnes, Alabama Arise; Bonnie Bradley, CHIP; Susan Colburn, CRS/Family Voices of Alabama; Charlotte Smith, Alabama Department of Rehab Services-Early Intervention; Tim King, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Alabama; Kat Rodman, Alabama Primary Health Care Association; Chris Hutto, CHIP; Alice Widgeon, Alabama Department of Mental Health; Acquanetta Knight, Alabama Department of Mental Health; Dana Driscoll, Alabama Medicaid; Charlotte Morris, MASA; Sunny Chance, Alabama Primary Health Care Association; Dale Quinney, Alabama Rural Health Association; Larry Dupree, Alabama Department of Human Resources; Marcia Teele, Alabama Medicaid; Sharon Parker, Alabama Medicaid

Call to Order/Welcome:

Jim Carnes called the meeting to order and welcomed the group. Introductions were made.

Minutes: Minutes from the May 3, 2011 meeting were approved. Any corrections should be forwarded to Bonnie.

Reports

Executive Committee - Jim noted that the Executive Committee met on June 10th. He reported that he continued to reach out to partners who have been with the coalition but who have not been attending meetings. He also noted that there may be serious implications on Health Care reform and expansion depending on what comes out of the deficit talks at the Federal level.

Project Reports

CHIPRA – Kat Rodman – Kat noted that the Primary Health Care Association is in the next to the last quarter of their grant. The intent of the grant was to increase access to Medicaid and ALL Kids through the Federally Qualified Health Centers and Rural Health Centers. The grant has developed permanent kiosks in the health centers as well as in libraries, hospitals and Medicaid offices. The intent is to try to continue to expand the use of the AVAA kiosks. Also, application assistants have been trained in the Health Centers. And finally, APHCA has used a marketing campaign to outreach to the community. Kat provided some data on their program. She stated they have seen 1636 new enrollees, and 26,000 renewals. They have trained 78 staff to be application assistants. The intention is to train in at least four more centers. She also reminded everyone about the “Back to School, Back to Care” campaign that is being developed to educate families about the need for ongoing regular well visits for children and adults. This campaign will include: a video/radio psa campaign; a poster campaign; targeted school outreach; web coverage, Spanish community specific outreach and screening events. APHCA information about this project can be found at their website alaaccess.com

Maximizing Enrollment - Chris Hutto – Chris noted that ALL Kids has done a pilot project to test telephone renewals for enrollees. Recently, 500 enrollees were given the option to renew by phone. Of those, 32 responded. He noted that the process received good feedback. On electronic records, scanners will start being used for case records in the near future. Eligibility workers already have a dual monitor system to be able to work applications and look at the scanned application at the same time. We are also moving forward on on-line renewals as well as a Spanish version of the web application.

RWJ Foundation selects Alabama for Health Care Reform Assistance – The following announcement was provided by Alabama Medicaid. By 2014, Alabama must be ready to implement the major provisions of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA), including the enrollment of thousands of Alabama residents in a variety of health insurance programs. Thanks to support from the Robert Wood

Johnson Foundation, Alabama will have the benefit of expertise from leading national organizations and experts in the field of health policy and coverage as it prepares to meet this challenge.

The technical assistance and other resources are part of the foundation's program to assist states in implementing key health insurance coverage provisions of ACA. Announced by the RWJ Foundation on May 6, Alabama was one of 10 states selected through a competitive process for the program. Other states selected included Colorado, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, New Mexico, New York, Oregon, Rhode Island and Virginia.

"In the coming years Alabama will face critical operational and policy decisions regarding the implementation of the health care reform," said Alabama Governor Robert Bentley. "We will need policy, data and technical expertise to better understand our options, and we are pleased to have the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's support as we develop successful approaches to expand coverage and strengthen our health care system in Alabama."

RWJF will invest in technical assistance, research and monitoring, and consumer engagement to maximize coverage gains made possible by the ACA. Technical assistance will be provided to the states through the newly-created State Health Reform Assistance Network and will focus on setting up health insurance (benefits) exchanges, instituting insurance market reforms, expanding Medicaid to newly eligible populations, streamlining eligibility and enrollment systems, and using data to drive decisions. Experts estimate that Alabama Medicaid will expand health insurance coverage to more than 540,000 in 2014. Many other Alabamians will use health (insurance) benefit exchanges to purchase affordable health insurance coverage.

"Expanding and improving access to health care, and providing stable, affordable coverage is now in the hands of the state," said Risa Lavizzo-Mourey, MD, MBA, president and CEO of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. "In the coming months, state health leaders will form strategies and consider options that best meet their unique coverage needs. It's important that these ideas be shared, so that states can learn from each other. RWJF has a long history of effectively disseminating information, and we're pleased to serve as an unbiased, non-partisan convener to help different states share successful ideas that can be replicated and warn of pitfalls that can be avoided."

Insuring Partners

Medicaid – Marcia Teele and Sharon Parker– **Provided in Written Report for the period ending May 31, 2011 – numbers in parenthesis are from last meeting**

- ◆ SOBRA Cases – 245,058 (241,121)
- ◆ SOBRA Recipients – 512,136 (504,056)
- ◆ MLIF Cases – 30,174 (29,700)
- ◆ MLIF Recipients – 82,703 (81,196)
- ◆ Plan First – (women with no children) – 19,134 (18,519)
- ◆ Average Cases per worker – 1,529 (1,505)
- ◆ Average Recipients per worker – 3,305 (3,251)

ELE (Express Lane Eligibility) update: ELE allows Medicaid and CHIP agencies to determine eligibility using certain eligibility findings from other public need-based programs. Under an approved SPA (state plan amendment) , effective October 1, 2009, Alabama Medicaid began ELE using income findings from the SNAP(food assistance) or TANF(family assistance) program when determining eligibility for reviews for children. We began the same process for applications on April 1, 2010. Since the inception of the program over 190,175 children have had their eligibility determined through ELE.

AL Health Insurance Exchange The Governor asked the state Department of Finance to initiate planning activities and to request the planning grant funded by HHS in order for the state to begin work on an Alabama Exchange. The Department of Insurance (DOI) held stakeholder meetings (Dec, Jan, and May). DOI contracted with LMI and the planning process began 4/24/11. LMI held focus group meetings (6) in June 2011, and are working on other aspects of contact with Alabama stakeholders. A final stakeholder meeting will be held in late July, followed by the final report and recommendations in September. The results of the LMI work will be presented to the members of the Governor's study commission established by Executive Order 17, dated June 2, 2011.

Medicaid Customer Service Centers (CSC's): Alabama Medicaid has opened a new Customer Service Center in Mobile at 2800 Dauphin Street, Suite 105; phone: (256) 472-4361 or 1-800-362-1504. Eleven Out-stationed SOBRA workers were transferred from Health Departments in the city of Mobile to the new Customer Service Center. All workers from the former Mobile District office have also moved into the new Customer Service center. Other workers at facilities in areas such as Bayou La Batre, and Prichard, remain at their out-stationed sites. Medicaid's new Customer Service Centers serve as a one stop shopping office where clients can apply for Family Certification Programs and Elderly /Disabled Programs. There are computer rooms and interview rooms where customers can apply on-line and help is available to assist them with the on-line application. The agency is also working towards opening a Customer Service Center in the Huntsville area by the end of 2011.

Beneficiary Services Electronic Case File Update: Medicaid has purchased scanners for the Central Office, District Offices, Customer Service Centers and out-stationed workers. Soon all applications and mail will be routed to the Central office to be scanned and indexed into the system. This should provide fewer lost and duplicate applications, and quicker processing time for applications. Medicaid began conducting Proof of Concept testing in March 2011; and plans to start by scanning documents in the Montgomery District Office, with the Birmingham District Office next. After piloting scanning in these offices, all other locations will be phased in for scanning of all paper files. Forty DHR recipients have been hired to help with the scanning.

ALL Kids –Bonnie Bradley and Chris Hutto – Enrollment as of June 30 is 81,136 an increase of more than 5000 children since the March 31, enrollment of 75,980. Much of the increase is likely due to the enrollment of the dependents of state and education employees who are now eligible to apply. Bonnie noted that the CHIP offices are currently in the process of moving from the 2nd floor to the 4th floor of the RSA tower. It is hoped that there will be minimal disruptions in eligibility and customer service during this period.

Response to the Tornado Disaster – General Discussion

Department of Mental Health – Acquanetta Knight – Since April 27th, the Department has been partnering with ADPH to work with trained volunteers throughout the state. These volunteers have been covering Disaster Recovery Centers. The Department also received an immediate services crisis counseling grant which has allowed them to go into 10 regional Community Mental Health Centers in 25 counties to provide immediate counseling. They have been given approval to continue this immediate response for the time being. They have also established a toll free number for assistance at 1-800-639-rebound. Additionally, there are lots of materials on their website at www.mh.al.gov. Preliminary data indicates volunteers made 75,604 outreach contacts in the affected areas. Over 5000 individuals were seen and almost 3500 people received referrals to other services. There were more than 23,000 contacts made with children. Many of these children will be attending different schools in the fall. Of those individuals contacted, more than 2000 felt that their life had been threatened by the event. Finally, the State Pediatric Association got a grant to bring in Robin Gerwitsch, PhD a nationally known children's crisis and bereavement counselor to train throughout the state.

ALL Kids – Bonnie noted that following the disaster, Regional Staff made visits to each FEMA Disaster Relief Site to provide information that could be distributed to individuals coming in for resource information. Additionally, CHIP submitted a State Plan Amendment on June 8, 2011 which was approved by CMS. This SPA provides temporary adjustments to the State's enrollment and redetermination policies for families impacted by disaster events. Essentially, this allows for CHIP to extend the time for renewal documentation to be received into ALL Kids. This is effective for families within the 43 designated disaster counties. Additionally, the SPA gave the program the ability to institute policy changes should another disaster happen in the future. This will give the program added flexibility as needed.

Department of Human Resources – Larry Dupree, Assistant Director of Food Assistance. Larry noted that the Disaster State Nutrition Program that was instituted in the disaster counties was the biggest project ever undertaken by the Department. Both the April 15th and April 27th tornadoes were included in

the disaster declaration. Essentially, anyone who had more than 4 hours of a power outage were entitled to assistance as long as they met income requirements. The program was run in all 43 declared counties. Several measures were put in place on existing accounts. These were: May benefits were put on the EBT cards on May 1st rather than staggered throughout the first two weeks of the month. Also, the prohibition of purchasing prepared foods was suspended temporarily. Also, everyone on the SNAP program at the time, got their benefit increased to the maximum benefit. As far as the DSNAP sign-up events, there were held throughout the state. There were massive crowds at several of these events. Over 232,917 households were approved for benefits totaling \$96 million dollars. An additional \$27 million dollars came in May. Recipients did also have their April allotments reallocated due to loss of food. He went on to note that thousands received their EBT balance on the next day. There will be audits of the applications and a select number of applications will be reviewed for correctness.

Community Health Centers – Kat Rodman - The first patient was seen within minutes of the tornado in Tuscaloosa. Much of the work was from providers making sure they were getting medications for their patients. Mobile Units were sent out to assist as well. All Centers are up and running. She also noted that the Association is bringing in varied experts and grass roots individuals to develop a close knit network. They are particularly interested in addressing what can be done in the first 48 hours before the Government Response can be set up and begins.

Medicaid - Marcia Teele – Medicaid partnered with DHR to be available at DSNAP application sites. They developed an abbreviated application to use. Additionally, they requested a waiver from CMS. The intent is to not close cases on enrollees who are due to renew in those 43 counties for up to one year.

Department of Rehabilitation Services – Charlotte Smith - Charlotte noted that much of their work after the disaster has been replacing equipment for their clients. Also, Early Intervention has had to make up services that should have been received during the disaster. They are also looking at what is needed in the future to address needs.

Rural Emergency and Hospital Services - Dale Quinney - Dale took the opportunity to talk about his concern about the limited emergency services in many rural counties. He stated that the state will need to look at improvements in this area. Some counties have been willing to pay for local service when what they have is not adequate. He stated that 14% of all deaths in rural counties involved death of people not living in that county. He also went on to talk about the limited obstetrical care in rural counties. He noted that there are 55 of 67 counties considered predominantly rural in the state. In 1980, 46 of 55 counties had delivery care. In 2011, there are only 19 of 55 counties with care. In the traditionally Blackbelt Counties, there are only 2 of 12 counties with delivery care. He noted that much of this is due to a financial/reimbursement issue. Most births in rural counties do tend to be Medicaid births. He noted numerous ramifications in terms of the distance needed for travel and the increase in complicated births. There was discussion about some possible actions that could be taken to help reverse this trend.

Announcements:

Susan Colburn noted that Children's Rehabilitation Services received a system of care grant for children with special health care needs. The grant will provide approximately \$900,000, (\$300,000 for each of 3 years.)

Meeting was adjourned.

Next Meeting: October 27, 2011 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. – RSA Tower 15th floor Board Room

HANDOUTS:

- Minutes of the May 3, 2011 meeting
- SOBRA Statistics
- 3 Program Enrollment Numbers
- RWJ Technical Grant Report
- Medicaid Report