

Covering Alabama's Kids and Families Statewide Coalition Meeting
RSA Tower – ADPH Board Room
Montgomery, Alabama
July 26th, 2012
10:00 – 12:00

Attendees: Jim Carnes, Alabama Arise; Bonnie Bradley, CHIP; Tim King, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Alabama; Chris Hutto, CHIP; Charlotte Morris, MASA; Knoxye Williams, CHIP; Viki Brant, CHIP; Teela Carmack, CHIP; Gloria Boyd, CHIP; Teresa Stacks, Sarrell Dental; Dawn Ellis, ADPH – Family Health Services; Charlotte Morris – MASA; Paul McWhorter, Alabama Medicaid; Gretel Felton, Alabama Medicaid; Fern Shinbaum, CHIP; Jamie Manning CHIP; Sunny Chance, Alabama Primary Health Care Association; Melissa Bowman, Alabama Hospital Association; Linda Champion, Alabama Chapter of the Alabama Association of Pediatrics; John Pickens, Alabama Appleseed; Julia Sosa, ADPH – Minority Health Services; Fletcher, Alabama Department of Human Resources

Call to Order/Welcome:

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

Minutes: Minutes approved. If there are any corrections, they should be sent to Bonnie.

Executive Committee Report: Jim Carnes – The Executive Committee met and decided due to various discussion topics, no guest speaker would be scheduled for the state meeting.

Affordable Care Act Supreme Court Decision – Members discussed the ramifications of the Supreme Court Decision on ACA. There were specific questions about whether or not the State would decide to expand the Medicaid Program. It was noted that Alabama Medicaid continues to work with the Health Insurance Exchange to work on technical issues. No definitive decision has been made on whether the Governor and Legislature would be willing to expand Medicaid. It was further mentioned that with the many difficulties with the budget at Alabama Medicaid; discussions about expansion have not been a priority.

Health Insurance Exchange: Stakeholders continue to work with HIX representatives to make decisions about the exchange. The Governor has stated that no final decisions would be made until after the election. Alabama has not passed any legislation to create a Health Insurance Exchange. Additionally, there is a very tight deadline to have Exchange plans to the Federal Government after the general election. However, it is possible that this deadline will be extended.

State Referendum on September 18th – There was some discussion about concerns over the vote in September. The Hospital Association is working with advocacy groups to try to get the “yes” vote out. There is concern that the general public may not understand the ramifications if the vote does not pass. Efforts are underway to educate the public.

Eligibility/Enrollment:

Medicaid: Gretel provided an update for Alabama Medicaid. Budget issues at Alabama Medicaid have resulted in the RFP for the new eligibility system not being awarded. Other alternative methods to upgrade the system are being reviewed. DHR and Alabama Medicaid are working toward Phase III of Express Lane Eligibility. Implementation may be as early as early this fall. This should help out stationed workers tremendously. Essentially, on applications due to renew, if the child or plan first case is eligible for TANF or SNAP they will automatically be renewed on their Medicaid. This will result in savings through worker time as well as to postage and mailings. Also, there is a plan to administratively renew cases of children who are their own payees. For example, this would include children who are living in the custody of other relatives.

Gretel said that there have been over 6600 enrollees who have accessed the Medicaid web portal. There have been over 290,000 children enrolled on the program using Express Lane Eligibility.

CHIP - ALL Kids continues to have record enrollment despite suspending all Outreach. It was noted that providers and stakeholders in the community have been trained in the past on how to identify uninsured children and further how to assist families in applying for coverage. Therefore, these procedures continued to be used in the community.

There was a question about the budget issues at ALL Kids and what steps are being taken to address them. Premium and co-pay increases went into effect on July 1. There have been multiple discussions on other cost saving measures including the possibility of ALL Kids beginning to use the Medicaid physician network. No final decision has been made. Teela further noted that the Maintenance of Effort rules in ACA have taken away States' flexibility in terms of making changes to CHIP programs as other options such as instituting a waiting list or rolling back income eligibility levels are not possible. It was noted that with any changes, enrollees have to be given sixty days notice.

Maximizing Enrollment Grant – The grant is ending in February. The Site visit for the grant went well. NASHP has been supportive in discussions on how CHIP can address budget issues. Technical support will continue for the next two years after the end of the grant.

Partner Updates:

Office of Minority Health – Julia noted that their office has had several forums where they were discussing the ACA. It was apparently that people have a lot of misunderstandings about the legislation. She stated they likewise noted many misconceptions about the September 18th referendum.

APHCA – The CHIPRA grant was extended into March and has now ended. Sunny noted that Alabama was one of the top states in terms of performance of the grant. There were over 43,000 applications done through the web portal and kiosks. This may represent many more children who got coverage as one application may have had multiple children. Now, they are beginning to focus on issues related to access to care and prevention.

Alabama Arise – Has been promoting the Medicaid Expansion with policy makers in the state.

Meeting was adjourned.

Next Meeting: October 25th, 2012, RSA Tower, 15th floor Board Room – 10:00 am – 12:00 noon.

HANDOUTS:

- Minutes of the April 26, 2012 meeting
- Alabama Public Coverage Enrollment Demographics