

October, 2002 WVHKC Newsletter

National Program Staff Visit WV Healthy Kids Coalition

Staff from the Covering Kids and Families National Program Office visited Charleston on August 28, 29 and 30 to discuss progress on insuring children through WVCHIP and Medicaid. West Virginia has made great progress in providing health care coverage through WVCHIP and Medicaid. According to a recent survey, more than 94 percent of all West Virginia children have health insurance coverage. Another 3 percent are eligible for CHIP or Medicaid but not enrolled.

Ann Marchetti and Judi Cramer of the National Program Office complimented the Healthy Kids Coalition for the work of the Coalition and its local outreach projects in getting children covered. They urged the Coalition to continue to work within the current system to simplify and coordinate CHIP and Medicaid as much as possible. One of the goals of the Coalition, for example, is to have the same card for both programs.

The Covering Kids and Families Program works in almost every state and is funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF). West Virginia has a grant for \$700,000 to work on getting children covered and simplifying and coordinating state health care programs for children. With support from RWJF, the Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation, and the Sisters of Saint Joseph Charitable Fund, and designated federal dollars, the Healthy Kids Coalition, the West Virginia Primary Care Association, and the Governor's Cabinet on Children and Families have established local outreach programs in every county.

Next Meeting

The next regular meeting of the WVHKC is scheduled for 1:00-3:00 P.M. on Wednesday, October 16, 2003 at the WV Hospital Association office in Charleston. The Outreach Coordinators are meeting at 10:00-12:00 A.M. the same day.

Back-to-School Events Increase Calls

During the month of August 2002, the number of calls to 1-877-KIDS-NOW reached a record-setting 89,819, bringing the total number of calls to more than 1 million since the hotline was launched in February 1999. The Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), which maintains the toll-free line and a related website at www.insurekidsnow.gov, attributes much of the increase to the national *Covering Kids* Back-to-School campaign, which was initiated with a national press conference in Washington, DC, on August 1.

According to Joy Kauffman of HRSA's Office of Field Operations, this year's call volume was nearly 100 percent higher than calls to the hotline during the same period last year. Kudos to all *Covering Kids* projects whose efforts contributed to this successful effort. The WVHKC participated in a big way in this national effort with Governor Wise going door-to-door in many communities; the outreach coordinators hold more than 40 events through out the state to promote the enrollment of children in to the CHIP and Medicaid programs.

WV Moving to an Internet Application Process

The RAPIDS/Deloitte Staff held a kick-off meeting to announce a new project designed to support self-service applications over the Internet for CHIP/PWC services. This new e-application is called 'inROADS' (Information Network for Resident On-Line Access and Delivery of Services). The inROADS technical architecture will be based on the Pennsylvania COMPASS, which is an online application that is evolving into a single point of access for social services. Over the next several weeks, the RAPIDS/Deloitte team will be conducting meetings to identify the design requirements specific to WV so that modifications can be identified and customization can occur in order to transform PA COMPASS into WV inROADS.

Joint Application Design (JAD) meetings are scheduled to begin October 21, 2002 and run throughout that week. During these meetings, several stakeholders, including representatives from the WVHKC will be present to discuss the basic application functionality as well as program and policy procedure. The WVHKC is pleased to part of this new design effort to make applications more accessible for the general public.

Tobacco-Free Coalition Releases Recent Voter Poll on Tobacco Tax

Results from a survey recently commissioned by the Coalition for a Tobacco-Free West Virginia reveal that two-thirds of West Virginia voters (66 percent) support a \$1.00 per pack increase in the state's tobacco tax as part of an effort to reduce tobacco use, particularly among kids. The survey of 500 registered likely voters was conducted statewide in early September. The Coalition is touting the results as a "WIN, WIN, WIN" for West Virginia. The science and the poll together clearly demonstrate that an increase in the state's tobacco excise tax is a win for public health, a win for the state's fiscal health and a win among West Virginia voters.

Presently there is a \$0.17 per pack tax on cigarettes and a 25 percent tax on the wholesale price of smokeless tobacco. Studies from the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, a national group, suggest an increase of \$1.00 per pack would provide an immediate revenue boost of more than \$167 million in the first year alone that could be used to help balance the budget and fund vital programs. Additionally a \$1.00 increase would keep more than 28,000 West Virginia kids from becoming addicted to smoking, prevent 9,000 premature deaths from tobacco-related disease, and save \$535 million in tobacco-related health care costs in West Virginia.

New Grant Opportunity for Communities

RWJF will release a new grant application in early 2003 for communities that want to study issues of access to health care services. Each state could be the lucky recipients of two local project grants from the foundation. Be watching for more details on the web site: <http://www.coveringkids.org/>

Children's Policy Forum

The WVHKC will join with the WV Children's Coalition in sponsoring the Children's Policy Forum on December 11-12, 2002. There is a celebratory dinner on the evening of the 11th at the India Center on Corridor G in Charleston. Awards for outstanding work in the area of children's health and enrollment into the CHIP and Medicaid programs will be given. Entertainment by youth is also part of the agenda for the evening. The following day will be filled with workshops on how to better communicate your issues and various policy issues affecting families. Watch for registration information. There will be a registration fee but scholarships are available. If you receive this newsletter, you will receive a flyer. For more information about the Children's Policy Forum, contact Jennifer Jordon at (304) 342-6972 or via e-mail at coalitionmngmt@aol.com.