

APPENDIX B - CMS Informational Bulletin to Medicaid State Agencies

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
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Center for Medicaid and CHIP Services

CMCS Informational Bulletin

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FROM: Cindy Mann, Director
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SUBJECT: Updates on Children's Health Coverage

This Informational Bulletin is to update States and other interested parties on two items related to children's health coverage:

- the release of a new national survey in which Medicaid and CHIP receive high marks from low-income parents whose children are eligible or are participating in the programs, which also provides insight into the methods parents prefer for completing applications and the settings in which outreach messages are most likely to be effective; and
- Information regarding a new USDA project to demonstrate the effectiveness of using Medicaid eligibility information to qualify children for free school meals.

Low-Income Parents Give Medicaid and CHIP High Consumer Satisfaction Ratings

CMS announced the findings from a new report, "Parents' Views of CHIP and Medicaid: Snapshot of Findings from a Survey of Low-Income Parents." The survey was conducted with 1,936 parents with family incomes below 250 percent of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL), including parents of uninsured children, children with Medicaid or CHIP, and children covered under employer-based insurance. Highlights of the survey include:

- **Positive views of Medicaid and CHIP:** Seven in ten of the low-income parents surveyed say the Medicaid and CHIP programs are "very good" or "somewhat good."
- **Medicaid and CHIP rate more favorably than employer coverage among low-income parents:**
 - **Overall satisfaction:** 66 percent of low-income parents surveyed said they were "very satisfied" with the Medicaid and CHIP programs, compared with 48 percent who said they were "very satisfied" with employer coverage.
 - **Quality of care:** 66 percent of low-income parents with a child in Medicaid or CHIP said they were "very satisfied" with the quality of care, compared to 55 percent with employer coverage.

- **Access to Care:** 62 percent of low-income parents with a child covered under Medicaid or CHIP said they were “very satisfied” with the ease of finding a doctor who takes the child’s insurance, as compared with 58 percent with employer coverage.
- **Getting an appointment:** 57 percent of low-income parents with a child enrolled in Medicaid or CHIP said they were “very satisfied” with how quickly they could get an appointment with a medical doctor, as compared to 53 percent with employer coverage.
- **Peace of mind, affordability motivate parents to enroll their children:** Seventy-one percent of low-income parents say that “getting peace of mind” is a “very motivating” factor for enrolling their child in Medicaid or CHIP. Seventy percent of parents whose children were enrolled in the programs at the time of the survey said they were “very motivated” to enroll by finding out that the coverage was affordable.

For more information on the survey results, including information about parent preferences that may be useful for planning outreach and enrollment efforts, please visit:

<http://www.insurekidsnow.gov/professionals/CHIP-Medicaid-Survey-Topline.pdf>

USDA Demonstration Project to Test Using Medicaid Enrollment to Qualify Children for Free Meals

The USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) has invited State agencies (SAs) that administer the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP) to apply to participate in demonstration projects to evaluate the effectiveness of conducting “direct certification” with the Medicaid program. Eligible children will be “directly certified” for free school meals based on Medicaid income and participation information using automated data matching processes. Applications for the 2012-2013 school year must be received by FNS by December 5, 2011. States will be able to apply for funding to cover the associated costs. Additional States will be able to apply to participate in the demonstrations in future years.

For the demonstrations, the Medicaid program is defined as both regular Medicaid programs and Medicaid expansion programs under Title XXI of the SSA. Direct certification will not be conducted with separate CHIP programs. To be eligible for direct certification under the demonstrations, a child must receive, or live in a household with a child who receives, medical assistance under the Medicaid program. The child must also be a member of a family with income, as measured by the Medicaid program before the application of any expense, block, or other income disregard, that does not exceed 133 percent of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL).

The Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 amended the SSA Section 1902(a)(7) to permit Medicaid agencies to enter into data-sharing agreements with SAs that administer school meal programs to certify children to receive free or reduced price school meals or to verify their eligibility. State agencies that administer the school meals programs may contact their partner Medicaid State agencies to determine the feasibility of developing such agreements. Under the HIPAA Privacy Rule [45 CFR 164.512(k)(6)(i)], the State Medicaid agency is permitted to share with the school meals program individually identifiable information related to Medicaid eligibility and enrollment, provided that the Medicaid agency only discloses the minimum amount of information needed to certify or verify the child's school meal eligibility.

State Medicaid agencies are encouraged to work with school meal administrators to streamline enrollment in these important nutrition programs. Developing data-sharing arrangements may have advantages for both the school meal programs and Medicaid.

For more information, contact: Vivian Lees, Branch Chief, State Systems Support Branch, Child Nutrition Division, USDA Food and Nutrition Service, vivian.lees@fns.usda.gov.

FNS Public Website link to Memorandum SP 47-2011 and RFA attachments:
<http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/governance/policy.htm>