

# Medicaid Matters

## Security of protected data high on Alabama Medicaid priority list

Securing protected health information (PHI) and critical data entrusted to the Alabama Medicaid Agency is a top priority, according to Paul Brannan, Privacy Officer for the agency. Brannan, who works to ensure that agency data is used and stored in accordance with federal standards, notes that the Agency has strict policies and procedures to ensure that data is kept safe.



“Over the past year, national headlines have been filled with news about confidential information being stolen on laptop computers, found on salvaged computers, and improperly accessed by employees,” Brannan said. “At Medicaid, having proper safeguards in place and followed means the risk of the information being improperly accessed and used is greatly reduced.”

Some of the policies the Alabama Medicaid Agency follows include requirements that PHI not be stored on desktop computers and that data on shared or network drives must be password protected or restricted to authorized users. PHI stored on paper must be kept in locked file cabinets or in secure office areas. Disclosures of PHI to individuals other than the recipient are strictly restricted. PHI documents maintained on laptop computers or emailed must be individually password protected, he said.

For more information about Medicaid’s privacy policies, [click here](#).

---

## Adults on Medicaid have lower health literacy, assessment says



Adults who receive Medicaid benefits tend to have lower average health literacy than all other adults, according to a new report based on the 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy (NAAL) released in September. The report, produced by the National Center for Education Statistics, describes how health literacy varies across the population and where adults with different levels of health literacy obtain information about health issues. To view the complete report, [click here](#).

For many Medicaid recipients, low health literacy can make it difficult to understand directions given by physicians regarding use of medication or other treatments, resulting in adverse health outcomes. To assist Alabama physicians, health care professionals and patient advocates, the Alabama Medicaid Agency developed an interactive training program on health literacy which is available on a free CD or online. The training module,

*Continued on Page Two*



- Inside:** ♦ **Online Catalog Offers Expanded Selection, Streamlined Order Process**  
♦ **Easy to Read Flyer Helps Applicants and Recipients with Documentation**

## Health literacy training designed to assist health professionals

### *Continued from Page One*

part of the Agency's Medical Home – Health Literacy program, teaches physicians and other health professionals techniques to minimize problems caused by low health literacy. PRA Category 1 Continuing Medical Education credits and CEUs for nurses are available at no charge.

For more information about the interactive training CD or to visit the online presentation, [click here](#).



## New online catalog offers more materials, updated order process



More educational materials and a new ordering process are now available to Medicaid providers, thanks to recent updates to the Agency's online catalog.

The new catalog is designed to streamline orders by automating the fulfillment process. Because of these changes, **all orders for educational materials will need to be placed online effective December 1, 2006.** Providers needing assistance with an order should call 334-353-5203, send an email to [CatalogOrders@medicaid.alabama.gov](mailto:CatalogOrders@medicaid.alabama.gov), or click on the catalog's "help" link.

In addition to the expanded number of available items, the catalog features downloadable PDF versions of most documents and forms that can be printed directly by the provider or saved to the provider's computer for future use. To access these files, providers will need to click on the image of the document in the catalog to open the PDF document.

The catalog is available on the Agency website at <http://www.medicaid.alabama.gov/catalog/catalog.aspx>. The catalog may also be accessed by clicking on "Fast Find" at the upper right corner of any page on the website and selecting "Online Catalog."

## Easy-to-read flyer helps applicants, recipients with documentation

The Alabama Medicaid Agency has developed a new easy-to-read flyer to help applicants and recipients know which citizenship and identity documents they need to present in order to qualify for Medicaid. The letter-size document is suitable for use as a handout or as a small poster and can be downloaded and printed from the Agency website.

More than 500,000 Alabamians now on Medicaid and thousands more who will apply for services this year must prove both citizenship and identity when first applying for Medicaid or upon their first Medicaid re-determination after July 1, 2006. Medicare beneficiaries and SSI recipients are exempt from the new federal law.



To view and print the flyer, [click here](#).

**Recipient Questions & Assistance: 1-800-362-1504**

**Provider Assistance (EDS) 1-800-688-7989**

**Website: [www.medicaid.alabama.gov](http://www.medicaid.alabama.gov)**