

Medicaid Matters

“Together for Quality” stakeholders begin transformation work

Approximately 100 individuals representing state agencies, consumer advocates, health care provider associations, state higher education institutions and private organizations joined Alabama Medicaid staff February 7 to begin work to change Medicaid and the entire health care system in Alabama through a systematic plan of technological transformation and quality improvement.



The “*Together for Quality*” Stakeholder Council met to hear presentations on the goals, activities and timeline associated with the \$7.6 million grant and to begin disson how to radically transform a process oriented, paper driven system into one that is coordinated, patient centered and cost efficient.

In welcoming the group, Medicaid Commissioner Carol Steckel emphasized the importance of the groundbreaking effort for the state. “Alabama has taken the lead in so many areas – tourism, economic development and jobs development, among others. Together, we have the power to make tremendous strides in improving our health care system and once again, lead the nation in innovation,

quality and compassion for the people we serve,” she said.

Medicaid Chief of Staff Mary Hayes Finch and Project Director Carroll Nason gave an overview of the grant and outlined first steps for the project’s stakeholders. The two-year federally-funded grant will be used to create a statewide electronic health information system that links Medicaid, state health agencies, providers and private payers while establishing a comprehensive, quality improvement model for the Alabama Medicaid program. A two-day work session for stakeholders is set for March 8 and 9.



The project will be coordinated by the Alabama Medicaid Agency in cooperation with an advisory stakeholder council which includes participation by health care providers, health care professional associations, other state agencies, the Governor’s Task Force to Strengthen Alabama Families, private health plans, health care purchasers, health information technology entities, business, academia, patient groups, and quality improvement organizations.

For more information on the “Together for Quality” Initiative, [click here](#).



Inside: ♦ Agency takes steps to help recipients meet deadline, maintain eligibility
♦ New web site helps consumers with long-term care planning

Agency working to help recipients meet deadline, maintain eligibility

The Alabama Medicaid Agency is working closely with state health care providers to help a significant number of recipients meet a March 9 deadline for providing federally-required citizenship and identity documents to Medicaid. The recipients are at risk of losing Medicaid coverage April 1 if they do not provide the necessary documents before the cutoff date.

“We are taking every step we can to make sure our recipients know what they need to do to prevent termination of their Medicaid eligibility,” said Commissioner Carol Steckel, explaining that the Agency has sent letters, forms and other documents to recipients in recent months to help them prove citizenship and/or identity. In February, Patient 1st physicians and clinics received a list of patients who still need to provide the necessary documents to remain eligible. When requested, workers in some provider offices have been trained as application assisters to help recipients complete required forms.

Mandated by the Deficit Reduction Act of the 2005, the new law requires individuals to prove citizenship or identity when first applying for Medicaid or upon a recipient's first Medicaid re-determination after July 1, 2006. While the Alabama Medicaid Agency began requiring all new applicants to provide the necessary documents in July 2006, Alabama residents already on Medicaid were allowed a grace period in which to locate the necessary documents and provide them to Medicaid. In some cases, recipients' Medicaid coverage has been kept active for as long as seven months.

In order to prove citizenship and identity, Medicaid applicants and recipients must provide a copy of a passport or citizenship/naturalization papers, or present two different documents such as a birth certificate and some type of identification such as a drivers' license. Medicare beneficiaries and SSI recipients are exempt from the new federal law.

[Click here](#) to view handouts, posters and other items on the Agency's Web site.

New Web site helps consumers with long-term care planning

A new government-sponsored Web site is now available to help consumers to get the information they need to plan for long-term care. The National Clearinghouse for Long-Term Care Information Web site, sponsored by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), provides comprehensive, objective information about long-term care planning, services and financing options, along with tools to help people begin the planning process.

Designed by HHS' Administration on Aging (AoA), the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) and the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE), the Web site features a number of resources to help individuals start the planning process, including interactive tools such as a savings calculator, contact information for a range of programs and services, and real-life examples of how individuals have planned successfully.

For more information on the National Clearinghouse for Long-Term Care Information, please visit www.longtermcare.gov

Contact Us: **Recipient Questions & Assistance: 1-800-362-1504**
Provider Assistance (EDS) 1-800-688-7989
Website: www.medicaid.alabama.gov

