

Medicaid Matters

FY 2008 State General Fund Includes \$470 million for Medicaid



State legislators discuss the General Fund budget on the last day of the 2007 session.

Approximately \$470 million in state funding for 2008 fiscal year has been approved for the Alabama Medicaid program by both chambers of the state Legislature. The funds were part of the \$1.83 billion state General Fund budget which was finalized by the Legislature on June 7.

Gov. Bob Riley signed the newly approved budget to provide Medicaid with monies to fund state's share of the Alabama Medicaid Agency's total budget of \$4.3 billion for the 2008 fiscal year.

A separate one-year \$5.3 million appropriation from the Children First Trust fund was approved to fund approximately 500 additional home and community-based waiver slots, to allow Medicaid providers to write one additional brand name prescription each month per patient, and to pay for basic level prosthetics, orthotics and pedorthic devices for Medicaid-eligible adults between ages 21 and 65.

Medical Director John Searcy ends distinguished state career

Medicaid Medical Director John E. Searcy, MD, FAAP, retired May 31, concluding a distinguished state government career focused on improving health outcomes for low income children and adults.

A graduate of University of Alabama School of Medicine, Dr. Searcy completed his Pediatric residency at Children's Hospital Medical Center in Cincinnati, Ohio, in 1976. He established a private practice in Cincinnati and served as an Assistant Professor of Pediatrics at CHMC until 1988. He returned to private practice in Alabama in 1988 and joined the Alabama Medicaid Agency as Medical Director in 1992.

As Medicaid's medical consultant, Dr. Searcy played a central role in the development and modification of medical criteria, policies and procedures used statewide and in the implementation of numerous major projects and programs during his 15-year tenure. Additionally, Dr. Searcy was involved with a variety of clinical and technological projects to improve health outcomes for children and adults, including the development of CME training programs on pediatric asthma, the medical home and health literacy.

Dr. Searcy's retirement plans include a move to Dothan where he will join his daughter, also a pediatrician, in private practice.



- ◆ **Pilot project to test electronic verification of applicant income**
- ◆ **Sheila McDaniel named Agency's "Extra Mile" employee for April - June**

Sheila McDaniel named Extra Mile Employee for April - June

When Sheila McDaniel talks, she looks a person straight in the eye, the same way she approaches a challenge – straight forward. In early 2006, the Nurse II was given the challenge of becoming a Nursing Supervisor in the Prior Approval Unit and helping reduce a backlog of Prior Approval requests. Within a couple of months, the list was under control and a system in place to help prevent another backlog.

Mrs. McDaniel's "willingness to do whatever is necessary to complete a task, her ability to remain creative in her approach to achieve efficiency while always maintaining a optimistic way of thinking" were among the reasons cited for her recognition as the winner of the Alabama Medicaid Agency's "Extra Mile" Award for April-June 2007.



The "Extra Mile" Award is given quarterly to an outstanding Medicaid employee who has gone beyond his/her assigned job duties. Nominated by a supervisor or co-workers, the recipient is chosen by a selection committee of Agency employees.

"Sheila was aware that she was gaining additional responsibilities and duties without any increase in her salary. This act demonstrated her positive attitude and willingness to go the extra mile," said Debra Shufford, Associate Director of the PA Unit, in her nomination of Mrs. McDaniel. [See more...](#)

Pilot project to test electronic verification of applicant income

Timely, accurate income verification with less paperwork is the goal of a new pilot project in Alabama sponsored by the Alabama Medicaid Agency, along with the Alabama Department of Human Resources. The agencies are currently working with TALX, a private payroll firm, to test the feasibility of verifying applicants' income electronically instead of relying on estimates or other paper-based information presented by applicants.

During the 90-day pilot test, Agency staff will receive training on use of the new system and will use the data to verify applicants' incomes. If successful, officials of both agencies plan to expand the project in hopes of simplifying the application process while increasing the accuracy of the data obtained.

New website helps Alabama families gather information about services



A new website is now available for Alabama families interested in finding out more about qualifying for health and human services. Sponsored by the Governor's Task Force to Strengthen Alabama Families, the web-based Camellia I information tool provides a free, computer-based tool to help individuals organize their personal data and identify benefits or services family members may qualify for. Assistance is also provided to users who need help in applying for services. To access the

new computer tool, click on www.camellia.alabama.gov

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

