

# Medicaid Matters

## Meeting generates ideas to improve Medicaid maternity care program

A series of open discussions aimed at improving infant mortality rates and the Medicaid Maternity Care program in Alabama began December 8 in Tuscaloosa as a large group of physicians, nurses, care coordinators, hospital employees, program managers, state agency representatives and others gathered during the first of five “Town Hall” meetings.

Alabama Medicaid Commissioner Carol Steckel told attendees that the Agency’s “major players” were on hand to listen to their ideas regarding improvements for a redesigned Maternity Care program. She challenged participants to not only help generate ideas and suggestions to improve the Agency’s Maternity Care program, but to also provide statistical and cost information the Agency needs to stay within its budget.

“Help us, not only with a list of suggestions, but also how to quantify and justify them, to make it through the budget process so that we can accomplish what everyone wants to accomplish—healthier babies, healthier moms, and a Medicaid program that is viable,” urged Commissioner Steckel. [Read more >>](#)



*Daniel Avery, M.D., a Tuscaloosa obstetrician, listens as Commissioner Carol Steckel discusses redesign ideas during the first Medicaid maternity town hall meeting.*

## State announces additional \$28 million in drug suit settlements

New settlements totaling \$28 million have been negotiated between the state and several drug manufacturers, bringing the total recovered by the state in its ongoing Average Wholesale Price (AWP) litigation to nearly \$35 million.



*Commissioner Carol Steckel and Alabama Attorney General Troy King look over the list of drug company settlements.*

The settlements were announced December 23 by Alabama Attorney General Troy King as the state prepares for its fourth trial, set for February 9 in Montgomery Circuit Court. More than 70 lawsuits have been filed against drug manufacturers for inflating the price paid by Medicaid for prescription drugs between 1991 and 2005. Three verdicts, representing more than \$250 million, have been reached in the state’s favor although all three decisions have been appealed to the Alabama Supreme Court.

“These settlements show my office is not going to sit idly by and let these companies steal from the neediest in Alabama,” King said. [Read more >>](#)



- ◆ **Commissioner Steckel elected to national association board**
- ◆ **Medicaid’s annual Christmas project sets records for giving**

## Christmas Project sets record for people assisted and donations

It was a joyous Christmas for a total of 62 needy Montgomery-area residents who received clothing, toys, and other gifts, along with toiletries and canned goods, through the generosity and compassion of Medicaid employees. Christmas Project 2008 set a record for number of individuals assisted, as well as monetary donations of nearly \$2,100.

“The lists were long and the wants (and needs) many for fulfilling Christmas wishes this year,” said Kim Davis-Allen, Christmas Project chair. “But, that has never stopped us before.”

Davis-Allen, Transformation Initiatives Division director, said Santa Claus collected over \$1,200 in the Central Office, with the additional money coming from football ticket raffles and other donations. Several agency employees also contributed their time in sorting and wrapping gifts, as well as making the deliveries to the “adopted” families.



*Ozenia Patterson and Kim Davis-Allen start the task of sorting presents for delivery to children, families and elderly citizens the weekend before Christmas. The annual project by Alabama Medicaid Agency employees drew record donations this year.*

“Even with some facing tough times themselves, Agency employees reached out to help others, demonstrating the true spirit of Christmas,” said Davis-Allen.

## Steckel elected to national human services association board

Alabama Medicaid Commissioner Carol H. Steckel has been elected treasurer of the American Public Human Services Association (APHSA). Steckel will serve a two-year term starting January 1, 2009. She currently is vice-chair of the Health Care Committee of the APHSA National Council of State Human Service Administrators and chair of the National Association of State Medicaid Directors.

The APHSA is a nonprofit, bipartisan organization of individuals and agencies concerned with human services. Its mission is to develop, promote and implement public human service policies and practices that improve the health and well-being of families, children and adults.

Steckel has served as Alabama’s Medicaid commissioner since her appointment by Governor Bob Riley in 2003. Steckel has a master’s degree in Public Health from the University of Alabama at Birmingham and a Bachelor of Science degree in Sociology from Birmingham-Southern College.

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

