

# Medicaid Matters

## Medicaid resumes QI-1 program with additional federal funding

A new infusion of federal funds will make it possible for many elderly and disabled Alabamians on Medicare to again qualify for help in paying the cost of their monthly Medicare Part B premiums, the Alabama Medicaid Agency announced July 29.



The Agency was notified July 25 that the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) approved approximately \$17.4 million of the \$18.8 million requested by the Agency for the Qualifying Individual One (QI-1) program for the 2008 fiscal year. Approved on July 15 by Congress, the additional funding allows Medicaid to reinstate eligibility for most of the 15,000 individuals who lost QI-1 program coverage on June 30.

The QI-1 program, which helps pay the monthly Medicare Part B premium of \$96.40, ended on June 30 after the state was allocated only \$11.7 million for the program by CMS. The program is 100 percent federally funded.

"We appreciate the support of the Alabama Congressional delegation in helping to ensure the funding of this program and in preserving this important health coverage for the elderly and disabled in our state," said Medicaid Commissioner Carol H. Steckel.

Approximately 11,250 Alabamians are expected to be reinstated to the program with a July 1 effective date. Any Medicare Part B premiums deducted from the Social Security checks of this group will be refunded as soon as possible. An additional 4,000 state residents will have to wait until October 1 when new funding is available. These recipients will be responsible for paying the monthly premium for the months of July, August and September.

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## Steckel to chair national Medicaid directors' association

Alabama Medicaid Commissioner Carol H. Steckel has been elected chair of the Executive Committee of the National Association of State Medicaid Directors. As chair, Commissioner Steckel will represent the association before the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, in testimony before Congress, and in discussions with other related organizations.

The association consists of representatives of state Medicaid agencies, including the District of Columbia and the territories. The association serves as a focal point of communication between the states and the federal government, and provides an information network among the states on Medicaid issues such as targeted case management, program integrity and health care reform. [Read more >>](#)



*Commissioner Steckel*



- ◆ **TFQ Initiative debuts QTool electronic clinical support tool**
- ◆ **Cost of Dispensing Survey report expected in August**
- ◆ **2007 Medicaid statistics by county now available on website**

## TFQ Initiative introduces QTool/ electronic clinical support tool

Less than a year after securing a vendor, the Alabama Medicaid Agency went “on the road” in July to introduce QTool, its electronic clinical support tool, to physicians, administrators and other health professionals in nine pilot counties as implementation of its Together for Quality (TFQ) Medicaid transformation initiative continued into its second year.

Beginning the week of July 14th, the first of 68 clinic and physician office sites were able to test the new web-based clinical support tool using the providers’ own patient data. A total of 298 providers and 90 medical residents have agreed to participate thus far, with more expected to join as the pilot project continues.



*Medicaid Medical Director, Mary McIntyre, M.D., introduces the QTool to Angela Martin, M.D., of Anniston*



*Tina Ledbetter answers questions about QTool from Voncille Lewis, office manager for Montgomery family practice physician Kynard Adams, M.D.*

Demonstrated at a July 9 TFQ stakeholder meeting, the first version of the QTool allows providers a read-only view of claims-based data on office visits, medications, lab tests and other procedures. The clinical support tool also displays rules-based alerts for management of asthma and diabetes patients. Versions to be released later in 2008 will add provider update/editing capability, a provider message center, e-prescribing capability, a referral function, email, provider dashboard reporting and better management of patient-provider encounter workflow (SOAP) for recording and viewing patient visit records. [Read more >>](#)

## Cost of Dispensing Survey report expected in August

Thanks to strong participation in the Alabama Medicaid Agency’s Cost of Dispensing Survey (CODS), the Agency has moved one step closer to establishing a benchmark rate that can be used to compensate pharmacists for the professional services they provide to Medicaid recipients.

Almost 70 percent of all in-state Alabama Medicaid-enrolled pharmacies completed the survey during April and May. Administered under contract by Health Information Designs (HID), the survey asked the state’s pharmacists to submit comprehensive data regarding staffing, overhead and other cost information using a survey instrument and instructions developed in close coordination with pharmacy-related organizations, according to Kelli Littlejohn, PharmD., director of Pharmacy Services for the Agency. [Read more >>](#)

## 2007 Medicaid Statistics by County now available on agency website

Need information about Medicaid in your county? The updated Alabama Medicaid Statistics by County for 2007 is available on the Agency’s website at [www.medicaid.alabama.gov](http://www.medicaid.alabama.gov). It contains county-specific data on population, Medicaid eligibles and payments by recipient and provider.

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