

Medicaid Matters

State sues federal government over funds awarded in drug lawsuits

A recent move by the federal government to claim millions awarded to, but not yet received by the state of Alabama in lawsuits against pharmaceutical companies will have a “chilling effect” on states seeking to fight fraudulent and abusive practices of Medicaid providers, Medicaid Commissioner Carol Steckel said.

The issue is at the center of a lawsuit filed by the state over the federal government’s claim for nearly half of the \$282 million in jury awards and settlements resulting from lawsuits filed against pharmaceutical companies for inflating the price Medicaid paid for drugs.

Alabama Attorney General Troy King filed suit against the Centers for Medicare and Medical Services (CMS) in federal court in Montgomery on November 3. He said the move was prompted by an October 28 letter sent to Alabama Medicaid Agency by Herb Kuhn, CMS deputy administrator.



“His (Kuhn’s) agency demanded payment of the federal share of any amounts won by the state of Alabama within 60 days of the entry of a finding of liability, trying to confiscate monies that are being contested on appeal, and of which, Alabama has yet to receive even one dime itself,” said King in a news conference announcing the lawsuit. [Read more >>](#)

1st Look Program to target dental caries in Alabama’s young children

Infants and toddlers at high risk for serious dental problems will soon benefit from a collaborative effort aimed at preventing early childhood caries in children covered by the Alabama Medicaid Agency.

Take a 1st Look

A Healthy Smile = A Healthy Child

Developed in partnership with the state’s pediatric dentists and pediatricians, the Agency’s 1st Look Program is designed to reduce early childhood caries by encouraging primary care physicians to perform dental risk assessments, provide anticipatory guidance, apply fluoride varnish when indicated, and refer children to a dental home by age one. Children already seen by a dentist do not qualify for the 1st Look Program. Participating primary medical providers (PMPs) must first obtain certification by completing a Medicaid-approved training course. The 1st Look Program is scheduled to begin in January 2009.

“Early prevention of dental caries will ultimately result in improved oral health for high-risk Alabama children,” said Medicaid Commissioner Carol Steckel. “This partnership between Patient 1st medical providers and the dental community is a win-win effort that will significantly impact the overall health and well-being of the children we serve.” [Read more >>](#)



- ◆ State seeks input to improve Medicaid Maternity Care Program
- ◆ Extra Mile winner juggles office relocation with regular duties

State seeks input to improve Medicaid Maternity Care Program

How can the Alabama Medicaid Maternity Care Program be revamped to more effectively increase the number of healthy babies born in the state?



That is the issue to be addressed through a series of meetings scheduled in five Alabama cities from December 8 through January 29. The forums to solicit input from maternity care providers, patient advocates and the general public are a cooperative effort of the Alabama Department of Public Health's State Perinatal Council, the Alabama Chapter of the March of Dimes, and the Alabama Medicaid Agency.

The upcoming sessions in Tuscaloosa (Dec. 8), Birmingham (Jan. 13), Spanish Fort (Jan. 15), Montgomery (Jan. 22), and Huntsville (Jan. 29) are free to the public and pre-registration is not required. All five sessions will begin at 5:30 p.m. A

free Web conference will be available in conjunction with the Montgomery session for those unable to attend one of the sessions in person. Further details are available on the Agency's web site at: http://www.medicaid.alabama.gov/programs/maternity_care/maternity_town_hall_meetings.aspx?tab=4.

"We welcome any opinions and ideas on how to improve Alabama Medicaid's Maternity Care program and the state's infant mortality rate. We have a serious problem with a significant increase in our infant mortality rate, however, I am confident that, like we have done before, together, we can solve this problem," said Medicaid Commissioner Carol Steckel.

According to ADPH, the state's 2007 infant mortality rate increased to 10.0 deaths per 1,000 births, compared to 9.0 deaths per 1,000 births in 2006. Approximately 48 percent of all births in Alabama are funded by Medicaid.

Extra Mile award winner juggled office relocation with regular duties

As if managing the Birmingham District Office, the largest in the state, isn't a monumental responsibility in itself, David Tankersley was also in charge of arrangements for a simultaneous office relocation and conversion into the Alabama Medicaid Agency's first Customer Service Center on September 9. His success with those projects has brought him recognition as Mike Lewis Extra Mile Award winner for fourth quarter 2008.

"I am honored and humbled," said Tankersley, an Alabama Medicaid employee for the past 17 years. "I have dedicated the Extra Mile Award to the entire office staff because I could not have coordinated the move and transition into the Birmingham Customer Service Center without their assistance." [Read more >>](#)



David Tankersley with Commissioner Steckel

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

