

# Medicaid Matters

## Revamped maternity program to focus on improving birth outcomes

Maternity care providers, state health officials, patient advocates and others will soon partner with the Alabama Medicaid Agency to update the Agency's maternity care program in an effort to increase the number of healthy babies born in the state.



The initiative was launched in response to a significant increase in the state's infant mortality rate, according to Medicaid Medical Director Robert Moon, M.D. The Alabama Department of Public Health recently announced that the state's infant mortality rate for 2007 increased to 10.0 deaths per 1,000 births, a significant increase over the 2006 rate of 9.0 deaths per 1,000 births. Approximately 48 percent of all births in Alabama are funded by Medicaid.

"Although Medicaid's maternity program has reduced infant mortality from the 13.3 rate several years ago, the program as it exists today is clearly not as effective as it could be," Dr. Moon said.

To allow time to create a more effective program, current Medicaid maternity care providers throughout the state agreed to continue the present program through December 2009. During that time, the Agency will sponsor a statewide series of meetings to provide all interested groups and individuals an opportunity to provide input into the redesign of the maternity program. A Maternity Care Review Committee will be convened in 2009 to explore program options available to the state.

"We will invite any individual or organization that can contribute to the discussions about how our program should address the findings of our infant mortality rates and other issues we all are facing," said Medicaid Commissioner Carol Steckel. "By working together, I am confident that we will see an improved program that, once again, lowers our infant mortality rate and allows us to continue to provide high quality care to our pregnant women."

---

## Plan First family planning program extended through September 2011



Plan First, Alabama Medicaid's nationally-recognized family planning program, has been approved for extension by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) through September 30, 2011. The program began in October 2000 to provide family planning services to uninsured women who would not qualify for Medicaid unless pregnant. To qualify for the program, an applicant's family income must be at or below 133 percent of the Federal Poverty Level. [More >>](#)



**Inside:** ♦ eSignature streamlines web-based application process  
♦ New Pharmacy & Therapeutics Committee chairman

## eSignature streamlines Medicaid's web-based application process



Continuing a theme of transformation and technological innovation, Alabama Medicaid has streamlined its online application process by accepting electronic signatures (eSignatures) on web-based applications. Alabama is one of only a few states, including Wisconsin, Florida and Louisiana, now accepting electronic signatures on Medicaid eligibility applications.

Adding eSignature capability was at the top of the Agency's wish list of ways to transform its business process and as a step toward eliminating paper waste. "It was the one component of change that could be done quickly in which you could see instant results and it would be transparent to our recipients," said Lee Rawlinson, Deputy Commissioner of Beneficiary Services at Alabama Medicaid.

While web-based applications have been available since September 2004, Medicaid applicants had to print out and mail in the signature page after submitting the online application. The signature page then had to be matched with the applicants' online information, a process which could take weeks from the time the signature page was mailed. Now all it takes is the click of a mouse for the application to instantly enter into the eligibility system.

In contrast, 2,294 electronically signed web applications were received in the first three months with 1,846 of those having already been processed, according to Agency statistics. [More >>](#)

---

## Ben Main appointed new chairman of Medicaid P&T Committee

Ben Main, co-owner of Main Drug Store in Union Springs, Alabama, has been appointed chairman of the Alabama Medicaid Agency Pharmacy and Therapeutics (P&T) Committee, effective October 1, 2008. Main, a 1970 graduate of Auburn University School of Pharmacy, becomes the first pharmacist to serve as chairman. Prior to Main's appointment, the P & T committee had been chaired by a physician. Main is also one of the founders and principal owners of Southern Springs Long Term Care facility and TriMedica Healthcare.

The purpose of the P & T Committee is to comprehensively and objectively evaluate and appraise current clinical evidence relating to safety, efficacy and effectiveness of medications within a class. The P & T Committee also makes recommendations toward the continued development and refinement of the Medicaid Preferred Drug Program or Prior Authorization Program. The P & T Committee consists of at least five physicians and three pharmacists. Main has been a member of the committee since its inception in 2003. [More >>](#)



*Chairman Ben Main*

**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)

