

# Medicaid Matters

## Medical Director testifies to Congress on *Smile Alabama!* success

Nearly 10 years after it began, Alabama Medicaid's *Smile Alabama!* initiative is still drawing national attention for its success. On October 7, Dr. Mary G. McIntyre, Medicaid Medical Director, Office of Clinical Standards and Quality, appeared before members of the Domestic Policy Subcommittee of the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform in Washington, D.C., to testify about how the *Smile Alabama!* campaign helped improve access to and utilization of pediatric dental services for Medicaid-eligible children in Alabama. [Read testimony transcript >>](#)



*Dr. Mary McIntyre discusses testimony with Dr. Conan Davis, CMS Chief Dental Officer and former Alabama Dental Director prior to the hearing.*

“What made this possible is the collective determination of many people in both the public and private sectors to find solutions, and the willingness of dental providers, state leaders and others to implement the steps necessary to bring about meaningful change,” she emphasized.

As a result of the *Smile Alabama!* initiative, there has been a 216% increase (from 151 to 477) in the number of dentists who see more than 100 patients a year while the number of counties with one or no Medicaid dental

provider dropped from 19 to three by September 2009, Dr. McIntyre testified. The successful effort also resulted in an 84.3 percent increase in dental utilization, increasing from 26.7 percent (103,630 children) in FY2001 to 41.5 percent (190,968 children) in FY2007. [Read more >>](#)



## State applies for funds to create health information exchange



Alabama's vision of a statewide health information exchange (HIE) to improve the quality, safety and efficiency of health care delivered in Alabama moved one step closer to reality with the October 16 submission of the state's application for federal technology funds.

The state hopes to receive a share of \$564 million in federal stimulus funds set aside for state information technology projects through the Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology (ONC). If funded, Alabama's first goal will be to develop strategic and operational plans required by the ONC. The state does not currently have either of these plans in place, said Kim Davis-Allen, Medicaid Director of Transformation Initiatives, nor is there a state office to formally carry out these activities. Until this office is established, Governor Bob Riley has appointed gubernatorial Policy Analyst Margaret McKenzie to serve as Alabama's HIT coordinator. [Read more >>](#)



- ◆ **CMS honors customer service efforts of HCBS Waiver Staff**
- ◆ **Change allows Medicaid-enrolled pharmacies to give flu vaccines**

## CMS honors customer service efforts of HCBS Waiver Staff

As a result of a long-standing and cooperative partnership with the Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services (CMS), the Alabama Medicaid Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) Waiver staff has received special recognition for superior customer service in responding to the needs of Medicaid Waiver participants.



*Marilyn Chappelle looks for a good spot to hang the CMS 2009 Regional Award for Excellence.*

Marilyn Chappelle, Long Term Care Division director, accepted the CMS 2009 Regional Award for Excellence during the Region IV Home and Community Based Waiver Conference in Atlanta on October 13.

“Congratulations to Marilyn and her team for this well-deserved CMS honor,” said Alabama Medicaid Commissioner Carol Steckel. “The HCBS Waiver staff plays a pivotal role in the lives of the state’s most vulnerable citizens which allows the elderly and disabled to live at the most appropriate level of care.”

Chappelle said the award stems from the continuing dedication and efficiency of the LTC Division and Waiver Operating Agencies.

“The waiver team continually works to ensure that waiver participants are afforded the option of receiving quality home and community based services that meet their needs while also ensuring their health and safety,” said Chappelle. “The ongoing partnerships and collaboration with CMS and the other state agencies that operate the waivers promote this mission.”

Options for home and community-based services have been available for individuals applying for long term care eligibility since 1982. Currently, there are over 15,000 Alabama Medicaid recipients in six waiver programs. [More on HCBS waivers >>](#)

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## Change allows Medicaid-enrolled pharmacies to give flu vaccines

The Alabama Medicaid Agency is taking steps to make it more convenient for Medicaid-eligible individuals to receive flu vaccines at enrolled pharmacies in the community.



Effective November 2, Alabama Medicaid will begin reimbursing Medicaid-enrolled pharmacy providers for the administration of the influenza and H1N1 vaccines for eligible recipients age 19 and older. Alabama Medicaid will also continue to reimburse pharmacies for the seasonal influenza vaccine but will not reimburse pharmacies for the H1N1 vaccine because the H1N1 vaccine is being supplied by the Alabama Department of Public Health at no charge to the provider.

“One of our greatest concerns is about the impact the H1N1, as well as seasonal, flu may have on the state’s vulnerable target populations,” said Medicaid Pharmacy Services Director Kelli Littlejohn, RPh, PharmD. “By increasing access, we hope to prevent the spread of this potentially life-threatening virus.” [Click to go to Medicaid Pharmacy Services >>](#)

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