

# ***Medicaid Matters***

## **Voters approve amendment; Agency reverses provider pay cuts**

Alabama voters' approval of a constitutional amendment on September 18 not only funded the Medicaid Agency's "bare-bones" budget for the 2013 Fiscal Year, but also made possible the reversal of several reductions implemented earlier this year due to proration of the state's 2012 General Fund Budget.

Passage of the constitutional amendment enabled Medicaid's 2013 Fiscal Year Budget to receive some of the money transferred to the General Fund from the Alabama Trust Fund. Without passage of the amendment, the Agency would have potentially faced a \$100 million minimum shortfall for the fiscal year that started on October 1, 2012.

State Health Officer Dr. Don Williamson, chair of the Medicaid transition task force, emphasized that while the funds will help the state's Medicaid program continue to operate, that they are a short-term solution.



"I am pleased that the constitutional amendment passed and that we were able to reverse some of the cuts that were necessary last spring," he said. "However, there is an enormous amount of work to be done to look at how we fund Medicaid and pay for Medicaid. Passage of the constitutional amendment buys us some time to do this in a rational manner." [Read more >>](#)

## **Third Party, Program Integrity Divisions collect \$37.5 million in FY 12**

Two program divisions within the Alabama Medicaid Agency were responsible for collecting approximately \$37.5 million in Fiscal Year 2012 through coordination of insurance benefits, property liens, estate recovery, recipient overpayments and provider recoupments. In addition, the Agency saved an estimated \$351,568 by "locking in" almost 1,000 recipients to one doctor and/or one drug store to prevent excessive use or misuse of Medicaid benefits.



The two divisions – Program Integrity and Third Party – together employ 50 staff members including health insurance specialists, account clerks, eligibility specialists, registered nurses, administrators and investigators who collectively work to maximize the state taxpayer dollars by identifying and collecting funds due the Agency. Third Party currently partners with Health Management Systems (HMS) to maximize its cost-avoidance and recovery efforts.

In addition to monies collected above, the Third Party Division was able to prevent the expenditure of more than \$880 million by coordinating benefits with Medicare and private insurance, paying Medicare Advantage premium payments and paying for private insurance premiums for recipients when cost-effective to the state. [Read more >>](#)



**Inside:**

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## Alabama receives funds for Money Follows the Person project

Elderly and disabled Alabamians will soon have more help to live independently in their homes and communities instead of in institutional long-term care facilities, thanks to new grant funding from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). Alabama was one of three states notified by CMS on October 2 that their request for a Money Follows the Person Rebalancing (MFP) Grant Demonstration project had been approved. Montana and South Dakota also received MFP grants, joining 43 other states and the District of Columbia with MFP initiatives.

The Money Follows the Person program is designed to help states “rebalance” their long-term care systems by increasing the use of home and community-based services and decreasing the use of institutional care. Instead of institutional care, states will use MFP funds to expand services and supports in the community to make it possible for more individuals to live in the community, according to Ginger Wettingfield, deputy director of Medicaid’s Long Term Care Division and manager for the grant project.

“There is significant interest in increasing the number of options offered to Medicaid recipients who would like to live in the community and be more independent,” Wettingfield said. [Read more >>](#)



## Thomas elected secretary of national program integrity association

Jacqueline Thomas, Director of Program Integrity for the Alabama Medicaid Agency, has been elected Secretary of the National Association for Medicaid Program Integrity (NAMPI) at the group’s annual meeting in September 2012.



NAMPI was begun in 1985 to assist states in providing the greatest control of fraud or abuse for the national Medicaid program. NAMPI’s membership currently consists of attorneys, nurses, contractors, investigators, managed care staff, managers, pharmacists and others whose primary task is to investigate instances of fraud and abuse in the Medicaid Medical Assistance Program.

An Agency employee since 1990, Mrs. Thomas is currently responsible for the oversight of all activities surrounding the identification and prevention of fraud, waste, and abuse. This includes oversight of the Recovery Audit Contractor Program and ensuring that the Agency is in compliance with all aspects of the Affordable Care Act. The units within Program Integrity include Investigations, Provider Review, Recipient Review and Medicaid Eligibility Quality Control (MEQC). Prior to her appointment as director in 2000, she held various positions within the Agency to include Medicaid Eligibility Specialist (MES), Eligibility Division and Associate Director, Plan Monitoring, Managed Care Division. [Read more >>](#)

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