



LOUISIANA

FALL 2004

covering kids™ & families

This newsletter is supported through a generous grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. (www.rwjf.org)

ENROLLMENT NEWS

Over 21,000 additional kids now have health care coverage since Governor Blanco's Health Summit last March.

State Medicaid officials responded quickly to the Governor's call for aggressive outreach to enroll all eligible children and have even exceeded their enrollment objectives. Some efforts have included the annual 'Back-to-School' campaign that is undertaken in all regions of the state. Many partners collaborate to host and staff



events to get kids enrolled or renew their coverage. This photo was taken at the enrollment and immunization drive at the local health unit in Assumption Parish this school season.

A Partial Solution for Uninsured in Louisiana ???

Gov. Blanco to link state economic assistance for businesses to health coverage

At the recent 9th annual Department of Insurance Health Care Conference, Governor Blanco proposed that all companies seeking economic development incentives from the state provide health insurance to their employees. The details have yet to be formalized but securing state assistance may be tied to offering "access to reasonably priced health care coverage," Blanco said. Louisiana ranks 3rd highest in the nation for its rate of uninsured, 19%, or about 830,000 individuals. Most of the uninsured

are working and still unable to obtain coverage. The large number of uninsured is a huge financial burden on the state which provides some sort of medical care to 40% of the population. Plans to offer coverage to more adults exist despite the \$1 billion gap in the state's health-care system funding projected this fiscal year. Some include a project beginning next year that will assist small businesses in offering insurance benefits, and another called LaChoice will offer coverage to low-income workers.

NEWS * YOU * CAN * USE

Governor's Regional Health Care Consortia:

The purpose of the regional health care consortia is to facilitate the development of a more dynamic state-local partnership that will support change in organizing and structuring the delivery of and access to health care in not only their respective region, but also in Louisiana as a whole. Each regional consortium is responsible for developing a report to the Governor's Health Care Reform Panel by January 1, 2005. For more info: Visit the Department of Health & Hospitals new & improved website for updates, meeting minutes, members and more (www.dhh.state.la.us)

Rapides Foundation awards the Covering Kids & Families (CKF) project of Agenda for Children a new grant!

The project will enhance existing efforts in the region to reduce the number of uninsured children. Partners include CKF Coalition member agencies, Medicaid and the LSU Public Policy Lab. Data generated in the 2003 Louisiana Household Insurance Survey will be used to help identify remaining pockets of uninsured children in the 9 parishes of the Foundation's service area. Rates of uninsured here range from 14.5% down to 4.6%. Outreach efforts will then be more strategically planned and executed.

New & Improved Department of Health & Hospitals website

www.dhh.state.la.us

ALL STATES ALERT: SCHIP dollars returned to National Treasury!

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN???

On September 30, 2004 an estimated \$1.1 billion in SCHIP funds (money that had been allotted to states in 1998, 1999, and 2000 but which had not yet been spent) expired and reverted to the US Treasury. The bill to renew this funding called the Children's Health Protection and Improvement Act had bipartisan support and would have allowed states to use the funds for children's health coverage. The funds could provide health coverage for almost 750,000 uninsured children, of the 8.4 million remaining uninsured throughout the United States. (Families USA)

The current Administration proposes to use the \$1.1 billion for expanded outreach activities. Yet some states have not spent all the outreach funds they have while other states face shortfalls in the coming years just to cover the existing children enrolled in the programs. To maximize the enrollment of eligible children, the recommended best approach is to renew the expired funding and provide separate resources for outreach if desired. (Center on Budget and Policy Priorities)

STAY ALERT!!! There are strong possibilities that Congress may address the Act in a lame duck session after the election in late fall. We remain optimistic about this because of the strong bipartisan support and the popularity of SCHIP.

Reachin' Out & Upcoming events



CKF Coordinator Lin Stewart and Medicaid Region 7 LaCHIP Outreach Coordinator Betty Stanley at their 'Back-to-School' booth at the Bossier Mall in Shreveport



Annual Children's Resources & Health Fair in Monroe this fall featured an innovative way to draw in potentially eligible families using a celebrity photo -op.

November

17 Southwest LaCHIP Conference, Lake Charles Civic Center 9-3pm - this event is to draw state, local community agencies and individuals together to address the issue of uninsured children in the Southwestern region, which has the second highest rates by region in the state. For more information see www.lachip.org, calendar of events page.

18 CKF Coalition Meeting, Vidalia, Concordia Parish, location/time TBA, for more information please contact Lin Stewart at CHRISTUS St. Francis Cabrini Hospital, (318)561-4147

December

5-6 Governor's Solutions to Poverty Summit, Monroe - this event will culminate the collective meetings to be held throughout Louisiana over the next two months. Each region is to hold 'community conversations' to discuss issues related to poverty. Health & healthcare access, services, etc.. will certainly be integral to these discussions. Please be a voice for your community! For more information visit Governor Blanco's website at www.gov.state.la.us

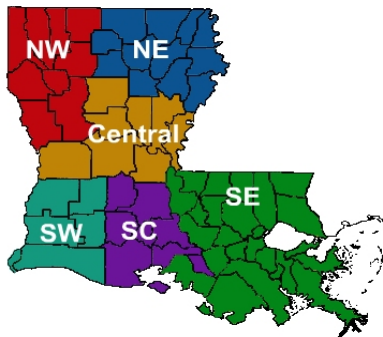
LaCHIP.

Louisiana Children's Health Insurance Program

Toll Free # 1-877-2LaCHIP (252-2447)

Louisiana has over **300,000** fewer uninsured children today than when the LaCHIP program began in 1998, and is now below the national average for children!!!

Louisiana Covering Kids & Families
Agenda for Children
1720 St. Charles Ave
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Louisiana Covering Kids & Families
Regional Coalitions : see Coordinators
contact information below.

CONTACT INFORMATION for all areas of Louisiana....
Call for applications, renewal forms, other promotional materials for your school, church, daycare, agency, office, neighbor, your children!

Louisiana Covering Kids & Families

Statewide:

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Medicaid Outreach Coordinators

Statewide Kyle Viator (225) 342-6043

Alexandria: Lester Turner (318) 487-5145

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Lafayette: Carol Stephens (337) 262-5228

Lake Charles: Susan Ledger (337) 491-2782

Mandeville: Linda Thomas (985) 871-1275

Monroe: Geniece Percy (318) 574-4531 x139

New Orleans: Mithra Bell (504) 599-0649

Shreveport: Betty Stanley (318) 862-9906

Thibodaux: Theresa Fussell (985) 449-5152

Louisiana Covering Kids & Families (CKF) project at Agenda for Children is part of a national effort sponsored by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to increase the number of people who benefit from state/federal health

care coverage programs, thus reducing the number of uninsured. The project supports 6 regional coalitions and a statewide coalition which organize to collectively work towards making the system work better for families.