

Letter to State Officials - Children's Health Initiative and Regional Conference Dates

December 19, 1997

Dear State Officials:

The passage of Title XXI of the Social Security Act, the State Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), the single largest expansion of Health insurance coverage for children since the enactment of Medicaid, represents an historic opportunity. States, together with the Federal Government, are using this opportunity to increase the number of children with health insurance coverage and to improve children's access to quality health care services.

The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is planning a set of regional conferences in January and February to bring together State and Federal Government officials, State legislators, as well as interested community leaders, as a first step in providing technical assistance to States in the development and implementation of their CHIP plans. An interdepartmental HHS steering committee is working collaboratively to bring resources to States, as well as to make it easier for States to learn from each other. The Health Care Financing Administration (HCFA) and the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) are leading the multi-agency effort to implement CHIP and to address interest among the States in effective outreach strategies and comprehensive systems of care for children.

The regional conferences will address technical information and assistance needed to implement CHIP, such as outreach, administrative simplification and streamlined eligibility, tools to promote and measure quality, coordination with other children's health programs, and "crowd-out" of private insurance coverage. National experts and experts from the States will be invited to supplement Federal experiences and perspectives. The Department will also work with States to identify program performance indicators and quality of care measures. Research and evaluation related to all of these activities can be used by States to improve their child health programs. The Department can also make technical assistance available, upon request, through State, national and regional meetings and a continually updated website (www.hcfa.gov).

The Department encourages collaboration among State public health, Medicaid, and other relevant agencies to reach and serve uninsured children across the nation. CHIP's passage fundamentally underscores the importance of well-coordinated outreach programs as a supplement to insurance coverage. We know that insurance programs constitute an important first step in the improvement of children's health, and that some children and their families may experience significant barriers to high quality systems of quality care, even with the

opportunities presented by insurance coverage.

The Department is working hard to assist States as they take advantage of this unprecedented opportunity to improve the health of the nation's children. We want to do all that we can to support implementation of CHIP among States. You should have already received a draft template, four sets of questions and answers regarding implementation, and several letters providing implementation guidance. All of these documents are available on the Internet.

Enclosed for your information is the [listing of the dates](#) for the various regional conferences. Please be advised that due to space constraints, these conferences are by invitation only. You should anticipate being contacted by your regional office with additional information on the conference in your area. The list of the conference dates will be made available on the Internet as well.

We look forward to working with you and hope you will feel free to call upon us for assistance and resources. The regional offices are also prepared to assist with your requests for technical assistance. In addition, please feel free to contact Rick Fenton, Deputy Director of the Family and Children's Health Programs Group at HCFA, or Gerard Ferguson, Ph.D., HHS Senior Staff Fellow, with further questions or additional ideas for technical assistance. Rick can be reached at (410) 786-5920 and Gerard can be reached at (301) 443-1134. We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

/s/

Claude Earl Fox, M.D., M.P.H Acting Administrator Health Resources and Service Administration

Nancy-Ann Min DeParle Administrator Health Care Financing Administration

Enclosure

cc: HHS Regional Directors HCFA Regional Offices PHS Regional Offices Ms. Lee Partridge, American Public Welfare Association Ms. Jennifer Baxendell, National Governors' Association Ms. Joy Wilson, National Conference of State Legislatures Ms. Cheryl Beversdorf, Association of State and Territorial Health Officials Ms. Mary Beth Senkewicz, National Association of Insurance Commissioners

ENCLOSURE

Confirmed Dates for Regional CHIP Conferences

The following are the final dates for the regional child health conferences. Please note that attendance at these conferences is by invitation only. Please contact the appropriate Regional Offices for additional information about the conference, (i.e. agenda, speakers, accomodations).

Region Location Date

Region VII & V Kansas City, MO (joint with Chicago) January 9, 1998 Region VI Dallas, TX January 12 - 13 Region I Boston, MA January 13 - 14 Region II New York, NY January 22 Region X Seattle, WA January 29 Region IV Atlanta, GA February 2 Region IX San Francisco, CA February 4 Region VIII Denver, CO February 5 - 6 Region III Baltimore, MD February 23