

Mississippi Health Advocacy Program NEWS

MHAP News

September 2007

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MHAP

Mississippi Health Advocacy Programs (MHAP) combines research, analysis and grass-roots organizing to improve health policies, practices and funding in Mississippi, especially in support of the state's poor and underserved people.

Trouble Applying for Medicaid?

Please report any problems or concerns you or your clients may be having applying for Medicaid benefits. Please call the Mississippi Center for Justice **MEDICAID HELP LINE** at **1-877-352-2269**.



Tell Us Your Story

Mississippi Health Advocacy Programs is compiling a database that documents health care hardship stories. Stories about the experiences of people help make difficult and often complex policy issues understandable to a broader group. Reporters and policymakers find the stories useful to better illustrate the everyday struggles that Mississippians face concerning their health care. We obtain permission from each consumer before releasing his/her story.

We are currently collecting stories, in particular, about **Uninsured Children, Racial/ethnic minorities, Medicare Prescription Drug Benefit (Part D), and Health Savings Accounts (HSAs)**. For more information [Click HERE](#)

Mississippi's FY 2009 State Budget: Putting Their Money Where Their Mouth Is?

September is here, which means it's budget time. Starting Monday, September 17th, the Joint Legislative Budget Committee will convene to hear every State agency's FY 2009 budget requests. The committee will hear testimony from September 17th to September 27th from over 25 various agencies. These hearings are important because it serves as a guide for the legislative appropriations process beginning in January 2008. Last year's generous budget allowed the Legislature to spread more money around, but it remains to be seen what will happen for this year. Here are a few hearings that should be watched for those concerned about health issues in Mississippi.

Department of Mental Health - Tuesday, September 18, 2007 at 3:50 p.m.

Department of Health - Monday, September 24, 2007 at 2:30 p.m.

Division of Medicaid - Wednesday, September 26, 2007 at 9:15 a.m.

Department of Human Services - Wednesday, September 26, 2007 at 3:45 p.m.

SCHIP Roadblocks: Where Will it End?

As we have been reporting in our newsletter, the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) will expire on September 30th if it isn't reauthorized by Congress. However, there have been unreasonable obstacles placed in the states' way of expanding coverage for their children. On August 17th, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), issued a letter to all State Medicaid directors on the new rules for states applying for waivers to expand their SCHIP eligibility levels above 250 percent. Some of these rules include:



- Requiring states show proof they have enrolled at least 95 percent of SCHIP eligible children below the 200 percent FPL;
- Children must be uninsured for one year before they can receive coverage;
- States must prove the number of SCHIP eligible children insured through private employers has not decreased by more than two percentage points over the previous five year period.

These cumbersome regulations have angered state officials and health care advocates all across the country. People from all walks of life recognize the importance providing health care to as many children as possible, but this recent development makes that goal virtually unattainable. If federal officials continue on this track, the health and well-being of all children is in jeopardy.