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Managed care and Medicaid: Initiative expands to new sites

Doing more with less. This is the challenge facing the Texas Medicaid program. As a federal-state shared program in which the federal government provides 64 percent of the funds and Texas provides 36 percent, the Medicaid system has become the cornerstone of health care for elderly citizens, people with disabilities and the poor.

Currently, Texas spends about \$18.5 billion per biennium for Medicaid or about 20 percent of its budget to cover health expenses for needy Texans. Rising health care costs, coupled with the poverty rate in Texas, means Medicaid

expenditures will continue to grow. In 1994, nearly one in five or about 3,603,000 Texans lived in poverty.

Texas' answer to the challenge of doing more with less is the development of a statewide network of health care/managed care agreements. This network is being implemented through managed care pilot projects. The first two projects, known as the LoneSTAR Health Initiative, in Travis County and the Gulf area (Chambers, Galveston and Jefferson Counties) were very successful. The Texas Health and Human Services Commission and the Texas Department of Health are working together to expand the

Medicaid managed care program to Tarrant, Bexar, Lubbock and their surrounding counties. The LoneSTAR Health Initiative in the Gulf area has also been expanded to include additional counties (Hardin, Orange and Liberty) and will expand to contiguous counties of Travis on September 1, 1996.

The basis for these projects is that enrolling Medicaid clients in managed care plans will improve the access to appropriate care as well as the cost effectiveness of the Medicaid program. Expected

See Managed care, page 8

And then there was one...

Consolidation. One-stop shopping. These are more than just terms used to describe the evolution of health and human services in Texas. They also describe the Texas Health and Human Services Commission's approach to public information for interested citizens.

Beginning with this issue of *The Service Connection*, news from

Community Resource Coordination Groups of Texas, the Texas Head Start Collaboration Project and the Texas Information and Referral Project will be included in each issue. This new initiative not only consolidates four separate publications, but also reflects our commitment to maximize resources wherever possible. Send comments to the address on page 8. ■

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The CRCG story

The Community Resource Coordination Groups of Texas (CRCG) newsletter, previously known as *The Bridge*, has combined forces with the Texas Health and Human Services Commission's newsletter, *The Service Connection*. This allows for an increased opportunity for more readers to learn about interagency initiatives. Acknowledging that there may be readers who are unfamiliar with the CRCG initiative, a brief description follows.

Q: What are Community Resource Coordination Groups?

A: Community Resource Coordination Groups (CRCGs) are local interagency groups, comprised of public and private providers, which come together to develop individual service plans for children and adolescents whose needs can be met only through interagency cooperation. CRCGs are operated on a county by county basis.

Q: What do CRCGs do?

A: Agency representatives meet on a case by case basis to plan specific services for a child or adolescent whose needs have not been met through existing channels. CRCGs, therefore, improve coordination of services to children and youth and are in a position to identify service gaps and barriers in their local community.

Q: What is the history of CRCGs?

A: In 1987, Senate Bill 298 authorized Children and Youth Services State Coordinating Committee in the Texas Health and Human Services Coordinating

Council to develop a model for initiating local level interagency groups, both public and private providers to coordinate services for children and youth with multi-agency needs.

Currently carried under Texas Human Resources Code §41.0011—a Memorandum of Understanding is required of the following agencies to implement the CRCG system:

- ◆ Texas Commission for the Blind
- ◆ Texas Department of Health
- ◆ Texas Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation
- ◆ Texas Department of Human Services
- ◆ Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services
- ◆ Texas Education Agency
- ◆ Texas Interagency Council on Early Childhood Intervention
- ◆ Texas Juvenile Probation Commission
- ◆ Texas Rehabilitation Commission
- ◆ Texas Youth Commission
- ◆ Texas Health and Human Services Commission houses the State Office of CRCG
- ◆ Texas Commission on Alcohol and Drug Abuse has been added to the State CRCG Committee composition.

There is a State CRCG Team, comprised of representatives from the above agencies, five private sector representatives and two parent liaison representatives. This Team develops plans to implement the MOU.

Q: What does the State CRCG Office do?

A: Created September 1, 1993

CRCGs: "Making a difference"

Regional conferences offer outstanding training and networking opportunity

We are excited about producing three regional conferences in 1995-96. Our Fort Worth Conference was a big success, so take advantage of the opportunity to attend the next CRCG Regional Conference. The State Office will host free of charge two regional conferences offering:

- ◆ An excellent networking opportunity
 - ◆ Training on the latest legislative developments & children's services and programs
 - ◆ CEU's and LPC Credits
- Don't miss your chance to attend a motivating, and energizing experience.

Reserve your slot at the second or third conference:

- ◆ February 1 & 2, San Antonio, The Wyndham San Antonio
- ◆ April 16 & 17, Midland, The Midland Hilton & Towers.

For more information, please contact Monique Ward at 512/502-3270. ■

the State Office of CRCG supports the CRCG system through:

- ◆ Regional and Statewide Conferences
- ◆ Disseminating Relevant Information and Training
- ◆ Data Collection

- ◆ Facilitating Initial Training of Local CRCGs
- ◆ Technical Assistance
- ◆ Facilitating Regional Workshops & Retreats

The State Office of CRCG, housed at the Texas Health and Human Services Commission, is supported through the pooling of resources from the state agencies

Successful CRCGs have the "can do attitude"

Community Resource Coordination Groups (CRCGs) are gaining ground around this great state of Texas. The momentum is up for this collaborative initiative, not because someone in Austin says it is legislatively mandatory, but because single agencies everywhere recognize that they cannot adequately meet all the needs of the children and youth and their families alone.

There are many factors facing youth and their families today. Teachers can identify many students very early who could benefit from services offered by health and human services agencies. Studies show that we can intervene earlier to prevent kids from committing crimes and going to jail. Kids need community supports or a safety net when they come out of jails and back to their communities. There are many families in crisis and an increase in the number of children and adolescents who have been abused and neglected.

The next step that many service providers are taking in partnership

named in the Memorandum of Understanding.

Q: What is the current status of CRCGs?

A: There are presently 138 local CRCGs available to 221 Texas counties (CRCGs available to 97% of public school aged children and juvenile population.)

Q: What are the benefits

with families is true collaborative service planning. It is this realization and action that brings the shakers and movers for children's services together. Whether it is at the state, regional or more importantly the local level, people are coming together to address individual needs and concerns of kids who may have bounced back and forth from agency to agency, or who do not have the "right diagnosis" to fit the eligibility requirements for categorical funding streams.

So as you collaborate, nurture the individuals who are risktakers, educate those who are not and create a safe environment to develop trusting relationships. ■

of CRCGs?

A: Benefits include the following:

- ◆ Between January 1994 and June 1995, CRCG coordinated services for at least 584 children and youth.
- ◆ Of the 291 children served in 1994, more than half had all of their service needs met.
- ◆ As of June 1995, local independent school districts had the highest number of referrals, followed by the Mental Health Division of the Texas Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation.
- ◆ More children and adolescents get the services they need.
- ◆ Use of the CRCG model promotes local decision making.
- ◆ A CRCG process has been developed to obtain useful data concerning service needs and gaps.
- ◆ Use of the CRCG model promotes interagency cost sharing and pooling of resources to impact service delivery and coordination and facilitate service integration.

Q: How do you find out more information about CRCGs?

A: To find out more information, including the local CRCG contact person, call the State CRCG Office, 512/502-3270. ■



CRCG
COMMUNITY
RESOURCE
COORDINATION
GROUPS
of Texas

Community Resource Coordination Groups

CRCG is a collaborative process serving the youth of Texas. In partnership with families and: Texas Commission for the Blind, Texas Department of Health, Texas Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation, Texas Education Agency, Texas Juvenile Probation Commission, Texas Youth Commission, Texas Commission on Alcohol and Drug Abuse, Texas Department of Human Services, Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services, Texas Interagency Council on Early Childhood Intervention, Texas Rehabilitation Commission and private child-serving providers.

Articles written by Project staff

Legislation supports efforts to improve services for young children

Recently passed Texas legislation charges state entities with finding ways to improve care and education services for young children.

In its legislative report, *A Blueprint for Action in 1995*, the Texas Head Start Collaboration Project (THSCP) outlined key early childhood issues and corresponding recommendations. The Texas Legislature acknowledged the recommendations through the passage of a number of bills. The passage of House Bill 869 and Rider 9, Article II of the Appropriations Act for the Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) mandates increased coordination among child care programs and prekindergarten programs in program services, eligibility requirements, funding, enrollment periods, fees and administrative functions. According to the legislation, HHSC must oversee planning for increased

coordination and report its findings and recommendations to the 95th Legislature in 1997. THSCP, which is under the purview of HHSC, is responsible for the development of this report.

THSCP is also addressing House Bill 1863 (Welfare Reform Bill) which calls for the development of legislative recommendations on the cost, design and feasibility of the proposed Career Development System. The proposed system is designed to support skill advancement for people who work with young children. Preliminary plans include the establishment of a statewide credentialing system, standardized roles and levels and standardized training.

Section 150, Article IX of the Appropriations Act for HHSC is also in keeping with THSCP's recommendations. The Act directs HHSC, the Texas Department of Commerce and other entities to coordinate efforts to identify potential funding sources and

technical assistance to support collaboration among local early care and education programs.

Upcoming THSCP activities which address the legislation include:

- ◆ Four Career Development System projects in Houston, San Antonio, Ft. Worth and Austin, each testing different components of the proposed system. Implementation is set to begin in Spring 1996.
- ◆ Eleven regional meetings in Spring 1996 to present the proposed Career Development System and elicit input from communities.
- ◆ Five local training projects regarding smoother transitions for children as they move among programs. Interagency coordination to ensure continuity is the focus. Grants will be awarded in Spring 1996.

For more information, please call Gwen Chance, THSCP Project Director at 512/502-3257. ■

Look out for Fall 1996 meetings

Be on the look out for statewide regional meetings in Fall 1996 on the proposed Career Development System for people who work with young children. We need your input and suggestions on how best to make this system work for Texas! ■

Resource Access Project supports early childhood partnerships

Head Start programs are addressing federal regulations which guide the provision of services for children with disabilities in Head Start. In 1993, 45 CFR Part 1308 went into effect, setting forth specific performance standards including the development of

interagency agreements to support coordinated disability services.

The University Affiliated Program of Arkansas, Region VI Resource Access Project is working with Texas Head Start programs to address the development of collaborative agreements. The

National literacy partnership

The Library-Museum-Head Start Partnership, a joint initiative among the Center for the Book in the Library of Congress, the Head Start Bureau of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and Association of Youth Museums, sponsors regional workshops nationwide to strengthen local relationships between teachers, librarians, museum specialists and parents by providing an arena to share experiences, forge new friendships and work together to plan new projects.

The Library-Museum-Head Start Partnership encourages the use of a resource package, including a video and user's manual, to teach Head Start teachers, home visitors, librarians, volunteers and parents to integrate books and other services into children's daily learning.

The Texas Library-Museum-Head Start Partnership Workshop

hosted by the Texas Center for the Book (TCB) took place on December 7 & 8 at the Holiday Inn Austin-Towne Lake. Jan Molztan, TCB Executive Director, reported that the 100 participants consisted of 45 librarians, 36 Head Start providers, and 19 museum representatives of diverse geographic and ethnic backgrounds.

"The highlight was seeing representatives from these different organizations--which are so important in and of themselves--come together to magnify their importance for Texas families," said Molztan.

Moltzan added that she is excited about the cooperation and participation of the Texas Head Start leadership in this important initiative for families.

For more information, please call Gwen Chance, Texas Head Start Collaboration Project, Project Director at 512/502-3257. ■

a guide for collaborating agencies.

According to the checklist, a comprehensive interagency agreement on early care and education disability services should include:

- ◆ Procedures for counting and reporting children;
- ◆ Transition activities to ensure continuity in services for children as they move among programs;
- ◆ Joint Service Implementation Plan
 - Child Find/Screening Activities
 - process for conducting referrals for evaluations
 - individualized education program development
 - placement procedures
 - specific program service delivery procedures (i.e., transportation, therapy and special education resource)
 - procedures for hiring and supervising staff providing special education services
 - procedures for review/monitoring of child's progress

For additional information, you may call the Regional Access Project at the University Affiliated Program of Arkansas at 1-800-831-4827. ■

Region VI RAP is one of 12 regional projects established by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services which facilitate the delivery of quality services in local Head Start programs for children with disabilities and their families.

At a Special Education Director's meeting last November sponsored by Fred Shafer, Coordinator for Special Education at the Region III Education Service Center in Victoria, Texas, RAP representatives facilitated a

discussion with early care and education representatives including teachers, principles, disability coordinators and others. Participants reviewed legal mandates on collaboration, including the Head Start performance standards, and reflected on existing barriers.

Region VI RAP Senior Project Officer, Judith Holt, Ph.D. gave an overview of the purpose and vision of RAPs and Program Specialist Veronica Valdez presented their Interagency Agreement Checklist as



Texas Head Start Collaboration Project

Coordinating quality services for
children and families

Articles written by Project staff

Texas I&R Project is experiencing changes

In August the Texas I&R Project underwent several changes as part of a larger reorganization of its parent agency, the Health and Human Services Commission. Judy Windler is the Project's new director. She joins the Commission from El Paso, where she was the Executive Director of an agency responsible for an online information management system which catalogues regional health and human services information. The Project's staff now consists of a project director, two I&R specialists, and a support staff position.

As part of this reorganization, the Project has also moved to a

new address : 4807 Spicewood Springs Road, Building 4, Austin, Texas 78759. The new phone number is 512/502-3234. Our email address is txirproj@hhsc.state.tx.us.

Please be aware that there is another move anticipated for April, as the Health and Human Services Commission relocates to the Brown-Heatley building. We will publish our new address and phone numbers in the upcoming newsletter. If you have any questions about the move or recent staff changes please feel free to contact David Smith with the I&R Project at the phone number listed above. ■

Texas I&R Project announces new Director

TACAA needs your help

A 1993 national study released by the Second Harvest National Food Bank Network revealed that the network serves 10.4 percent of the U.S. population annually. In addition, food pantries, soup kitchens, and emergency shelters provide 37.9 percent of food stamp recipients with supplemental meals. That number is likely to increase as federal nutrition programs are restructured. As a result, the Texas Association of Community Action Agencies (TACAA) is compiling a statewide database of all emergency food providers.

The database will be a centralized, comprehensive list of food banks, food pantries, soup

kitchens and other food assistance providers throughout Texas. Once compiled, the information contained in the database will be available to social service agencies and low-income Texans. The goal is to assemble a thorough and detailed directory that is simple to decipher and readily accessible to its prospective population.

Please feel free to inform other organizations that provide emergency food assistance to low-income Texans about the project.

TACAA contact: Tammy Morales, TACAA, 2512 IH 35 South, Suite 210, Austin, TX 78704 or call 1-800/992-9767 or 512/462-2555. ■

TAIRS 95 conference

The Texas I&R Project co-hosted the 19th Annual Texas Alliance of Information and Referral Services (TAIRS) Conference in Austin on October 29, 30 & 31, 1995. TAIRS was established in 1977 to address and promote: I&R standards, funding, education, training, communication, technology, publicity and legislative action. The organization's members actively network to improve I&R services to the citizens of Texas.

The conference was a big success with over 120 registered participants. Featured speakers included: Marilyn Morris, President of the United Way of Texas; Peter Aberg, Executive Director of the National Alliance for Information & Referral Systems (AIRS); and Dr. Michael McKinney, Commissioner of the Health and Human Services Commission. The conference included three intensive workshops on AIRS standards, marketing and automation. Twenty different sessions were offered with subjects ranging from "Schmoozing Public Officials" and "Volunteer Training" to "Advocacy vs. Empowerment" and "Managing Stress."

For more information, please contact Viola Soto, TAIRS President, at 512/882-4636. The next conference will be held in El Paso, on October 27, 28 and 29, 1996. ■

Finding Help in Texas 1996 edition available

Many state employees find themselves feverishly flipping through numerous reference books and phone books trying to find help for a caller in need of services they don't provide. There are organizations, information and referral providers, who are knowledgeable about local resources and skilled in assessing which are most appropriate for a given individual. They link people with services.

The 1996 edition of *Finding Help in Texas* will be available in March. *Finding Help* is a directory of information and referral providers in the state of Texas. Programs qualify for a profile listing if they meet any of the following criteria: the program has staff designated to provide information and referral; a budget line item for information and referral; or information and referral is listed in the mission of the program.

This year's directory includes over 675 program profiles, which is approximately 225 more than the 1995 edition. Profiles include basic contact information, the county or counties served, and target client populations. Profiles are listed alphabetically by city but the directory also includes an index by county.

New additions to the 1996 edition include a list of online resources relating to information and referral. This is a list of bulletin board systems in the state of Texas

accessible by modem as well as a list of relevant World Wide Web sites. Also new to the 1996 edition is information and listings of Community Resource Coordination Groups (see pages 2-3).

People have reported that the most useful function of the directory has been met while answering requests for information for areas outside of their geographic area. The caller may have questions and concerns about a family member or relative who lives in another part of Texas. Or perhaps the caller is moving and wants to be connected with services in and around their new home. The directory can provide a contact that you might not otherwise know about. The directory has also been reported useful by people who are not involved as professional information and referral specialists, yet have that function as part of their jobs. *Finding Help* links people to the appropriate services quickly and efficiently.

To place an order, please contact David Smith at 512/502-3234. ■



Texas Information and Referral Project

Connecting information
and referral providers
across the state

Articles written by Project staff

Managed care and Medicaid: Initiative expands

Continued from page 1

improvements include better access to primary care, more timely and continuous care, better quality care and more cost-effective care. In a system of managed care, government-financed health care is provided through health maintenance organizations (HMOs) and sometimes through the state administered Primary Care Case Management (PCCM) model.

An important characteristic of managed care is that each enrollee either chooses or, if no choice is made, is assigned to a primary care provider who serves as the enrollee's manager of care providing basic health care services and arranging all non-emergency services. The manager of care promotes increased access to preventive and primary care services. This facilitates early access to appropriate care and minimizes inappropriate use of emergency services and controls costs in the long run. Under managed care,

Medicaid enrollees' may choose from providers contracted by the HMOs or the state administered PCCM.

A recent report entitled, *Effects of LoneSTAR in Travis County*, April 1995, suggests that the premium payment analysis shows that Medicaid costs decreased by an estimated \$2,107,658 over the first twelve months of the Travis County Initiative as a result of lower premiums paid to the National Heritage Insurance Company (NHIC) for acute care services. This represents a 4.2 percent savings in terms of payments for Travis County and even greater savings anticipated with the expansion to surrounding counties.

With the expansion of the managed care pilot programs to Tarrant, Bexar, Lubbock and surrounding counties as well as new counties in the LoneSTAR Health Initiative in the Fall, 1996, there is a growing expectation that health

care costs in the state of Texas can be reduced while maintaining the quality of health care services provided to citizens in need. ■

Supporting HUBs

The Texas Health and Human Services Commission is committed to increasing the participation of Historically Underutilized Businesses (HUBs) in its purchasing process.

Commissioner Michael D. McKinney encourages all health and human services agencies to support the state's competitive purchasing process by giving HUBs every opportunity to bid on possible purchasing transactions. (Editor's note: This issue of *The Service Connection* was printed by a certified HUB.) ■



Helping people help themselves

Published quarterly by the Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC), 4807 Spicewood Springs Road, Building 4, Austin, Texas 78759.

Dr. Michael D. McKinney, Commissioner.

The Service Connection is a collaborative newsletter among divisions of HHSC, including Medicaid, Community Resource Coordination Groups, the Texas Head Start Collaboration Project and the Texas Information and Referral Project. HHSC accepts complaints on its functions and on the 11 health and human services agencies. Send complaints or comments to HHSC at P.O. Box 13247, Austin, Texas 78711 or call 512/502-3200 (Voice or TDD). To obtain this newsletter in alternate format, call or write the Commission.

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