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## Literacy effort "ROARS" in Texas

**G**overnor George W. Bush recently announced the opening of a Reach Out and Read (ROAR) site in Texas. Scott & White, a non-profit health care delivery system in Temple, will be home to the Texas pilot site for the youth literacy initiative.

As part of their literacy campaign, Governor and Mrs. Bush along with Representative Dianne Delisi of Temple inaugurated the Texas ROAR program in April 1997. Texas' First Lady Laura Bush kicked off the program by reading her favorite children's book to a group of kids at the Scott & White Pediatric Clinic.

The pediatric literacy program was created by a group of pediatricians and educators at Boston City Hospital in 1989. There are now more than 106 ROAR sites in clinics and pediatric practices in 34 states, including the new pilot site in Temple as well as two other new Texas programs in Richmond and Houston.

The pediatrician's role is to encourage parents to read aloud to their young children. Doctors invite children ages six months to seven years to take home a free book at each visit.

Here's how ROAR works:



Texas' First Lady Laura Bush kicked off the program by reading her favorite children's book.

- ◆ In the clinic waiting room, community volunteers read stories to children and demonstrate reading aloud techniques to parents.
- ◆ Pediatricians and nurse practitioners are trained to counsel parents about the importance of reading with young children, offering age-appropriate tips and encouragement.
- ◆ After every check-up, the child is given a new children's book to take home and keep.
- ◆ Every child begins school with a

home library of books to share with family and friends, and parents learn the value of reading aloud to their children.

The program's goal is to improve literacy which has already proven to

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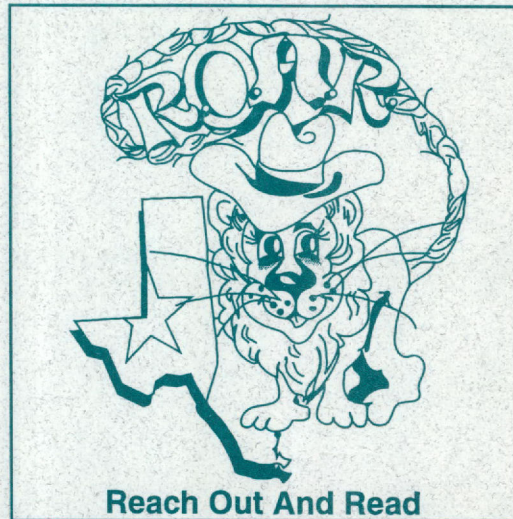
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be successful at numerous sites nationwide since ROAR's creation. Scott & White plans to distribute more than 10,000 books at the Temple clinic this year. This number will more than triple to well over 30,000 when the program expands to include all the regional Scott & White pediatric and family practice clinics.

Other new ROAR sites in Texas are the Fort Bend Family Health Center in Fort Bend County and the University of Texas at Houston's WIC Children's Clinic in Spring Branch.

The program will help parents explore strategies for integrating books and stories into a child's daily activities. At the end of the doctor's visit, the child will get a "prescription for reading," prescribing a daily dose of reading

for the child along with a new book. Scott & White predicts that children making routine clinic visits



during their first seven years of life can expect to receive at least ten books from their doctor or nurse.

The program is provided free of charge to patients and their families.

Research conducted at the ROAR's parent program in Boston City Hospital shows that pediatricians play a critical role in enhancing a child's learning environment and can greatly influence a child's interest in early literacy, especially children at high risk of school failure. The involvement of pediatricians in this project shows that early literacy is an important and natural step in the evolution of preventative pediatrics.

Through increased exposure and involvement of pediatricians throughout Texas, this new program hopes to encourage an entire generation of young Texans to enter the next century with a true ROAR! ■

## Texas Medicaid to recover over \$2 million in fraud

SmithKline Beecham Clinical Laboratories, Inc. (SBCL) of Delaware has been under investigation for its marketing, sales, pricing and billing of testing services. SBCL operates a national system of clinical laboratories which has been under civil and administrative reviews in 28 states, including Texas, for its business practices relating to the provision of laboratory services to Medicaid patients.

SBCL has entered into a Corporate Integrity Agreement with the Office of the Inspector General of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. They violated state and federal statutes

in connection with numerous testing services, including serum ferritin, urinalysis, serum iron and high-density lipoprotein cholesterol tests which were routinely performed in conjunction with other SBCL chemistry profiles. The total Texas Medicaid settlement paid by SBCL was \$1.5 million (state and federal).

Texas is also one of 44 states to receive a portion of more than \$20 million that LabCorp of America Inc. has agreed to pay to settle claims that the company allegedly overcharged the government by running expensive lab tests not ordered by physicians. Texas' portion of the settlement,

\$589,872, includes state and federal funds.

"We joined efforts with various agencies at the federal and state level, including the Attorney General's Medicaid Fraud Control Unit, to successfully complete these investigations and negotiate a settlement," says Health and Human Services Commissioner Dr. Michael McKinney. Detecting Medicaid provider fraud and abuse in our state is the main responsibility of the Medicaid Provider Sanctions Division of the Health and Human Services Commission, adds McKinney.

To report Medicaid fraud and abuse, call 512/424-6519. ■

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## Bringing managed care initiative to Harris County

Medicaid clients in Harris County will soon have access to managed health care. State health and human services officials selected six health maintenance organizations (HMOs) as finalists to provide health care to Medicaid clients in the Harris County Service Delivery Area (SDA). The HMO finalists are: ACCESS Health Plan and ACCESS+PLUS Health Plan (Memorial Sisters of Charity HMO, L.L.C. and Texas Universities Health Plan); AMERICAID Texas, Inc., dba AMERICAID Community Care; AmeriHealth HMO of Texas, Inc.; CareFIRST (Methodist Care, Inc.); PCA Health Plans of Texas, Inc. (an affiliate of Physician Corporation of America); Rio Grande HMO, Inc., dba HMO Blue (a wholly owned subsidiary of Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas, Inc.). The Harris County Hospital District's HMO, Community Health Choice Inc., will be another HMO serving the Medicaid population in Harris SDA. A state-administered

Primary Care Case Management (PCCM) model, known as TDH STAR, will also be available to most of the Medicaid recipients in the Harris SDA, bringing the number of health plan choices available to STAR clients in Harris County to eight.

Managed care implementation in the Houston area is unique because it will include two programs. The first is STAR which is the Medicaid managed care program currently underway in many areas of the state. It serves mainly mothers and children who are eligible for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). The second is STAR+PLUS which is a new pilot program to introduce Medicaid managed care to Texans who receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI), federal financial assistance program for low-income aged and people who are blind and disabled. STAR+PLUS brings together medical and preventive

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**In Harris County, STAR will serve more than 200,000 Medicaid clients. Also, about 65,000 Harris County residents will be eligible for STAR + PLUS.**

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### McKinney reappointed to post

Health and Human Services Commissioner Dr. Michael D. McKinney has been reappointed to his post by Governor George W. Bush. Dr. McKinney's reappointment was confirmed by the Texas Senate during the recently concluded 75th Texas Legislature. First appointed to the Health and Human Services Commission post in 1995,

Dr. McKinney has used his private and public sector experience to coordinate the state's health and human services system. He has indicated that there are several initiatives he wants to target at HHSC, including the Texas integrated enrollment project and the sunset review of the state's health and human services agencies during the next biennium. ■



## Administering Texas Medicaid:

**Texas is hard at work transforming its Medicaid program from the traditional fee-for-service to a system that enrolls beneficiaries in a number of health plan alternatives.**

Texas is hard at work transforming its Medicaid program from the traditional fee-for-service to a system that enrolls beneficiaries in a number of health plan alternatives. Such a transformation requires changes to the current administrative functions of Medicaid.

The Texas Department of Health (TDH), which manages the Purchased Health Services Program and other related Title XIX programs, is redesigning the Texas Medicaid Administrative System (TMAS). It plans to create a system that, over time, can evolve into the administrative capacities needed to provide the necessary flexibility for policy makers to pursue programmatic options that will best meet the needs of Medicaid recipients in Texas.

TDH recently issued Requests for Proposals (RFPs) to contract out administrative services in support of the Texas Medicaid program. RFPs released included:

- ◆ Claims Administration/MMIS services—full-scale operations under this contract are expected to begin September 1, 1998. The Claims Administrator contractor processes and adjudicates all claims for Medicaid services outside the scope of some capitated arrangements between health plans and TDH. This contractor will:
  - Assist TDH with the development and implementation of the

Medical Policy.

- Conduct provider recruitment, education and communication activities in fee-for-service Medicaid.
- Conduct Surveillance & Utilization Review System activities for the TMAS as a whole.

The Claims Administrator contractor will develop and maintain the Texas Medicaid Management Information System.

- ◆ Primary Care Case Management (PCCM)/State of Texas Access Reform (STAR) Network Administration services—full-scale operations under this contract are expected to begin September 1, 1998. The PCCM/STAR Network Administrator contractor is responsible for developing and managing the State administered STAR Network, exclusive of claims processing and adjudication services for the STAR Network, which will be furnished by the Claims Administrator contractor. Currently, the STAR Network consists mainly of the PCCM program and related contracts for inpatient hospital services. It is expected to evolve toward new program models.
- ◆ Enrollment Broker services—full-scale operations under this contract are expected to begin September 1, 1997. The Enrollment Broker contractor will assist Medicaid beneficiaries involved in Medicaid managed

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## A time for programmatic change

care benefit options. During the implementation phase, the contractor will:

- Identify beneficiaries who are eligible to enroll in Medicaid managed care options.
- Provide education and counseling activities to assist beneficiaries in their selection among available Medicaid managed care options, and in the selection of a primary care provider within those options.
- Operate the information interface required to record enrollment decisions in the SAVERR eligibility system, and to inform health plans/primary care providers of their enrolled beneficiaries.

As part of the operations phase, this contractor will provide ongoing services, including disenrollment/reenrollment activity of beneficiaries. Also, the contractor will maintain a Client Hotline, which will serve as the front end for beneficiary inquiries for the administration of Medicaid managed care.

- ◆ Quality Monitoring services-full-scale operations under this contract are expected to begin September 1, 1997. The Quality Monitor contractor offers administrative support to TDH's efforts to continuously monitor the access of Medicaid beneficiaries to high quality

health care services. This contractor will perform the federal Health Care Financing Administration (HCFA) required functions of an External Quality Review Organization.


- ◆ Managed Care Contract Administration Support-full-scale operations under this contract are expected to begin September 1, 1998. The Managed Care Contract Administration Support contractor will provide administrative support to TDH's Bureau of Managed Care which has primary operational responsibility for the administration of capitated contracts between TDH and health plans.

This contractor assists the Bureau of Managed Care with the implementation phase and operational phase of all Medicaid managed care program sites and will be the main agent for contract administration and oversight.

All contractors will be expected to start required transition activities as soon as the contract is awarded.

The primary objectives of the Medicaid program in Texas are to ensure the accessibility of cost effective quality health care services to Medicaid recipients. Through these RFPs, the state of Texas plans to implement state of the art services within the Medicaid's program administrative functions. ■

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## Transforming the state's Medicaid program into a managed care delivery system is becoming a reality across Texas.

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### Info on the net

The Medicaid Provider Exclusion List is now available on the Internet at:

[www.hhsc.state.tx.us](http://www.hhsc.state.tx.us)

The list includes providers that have been excluded from participating in the Medicaid program.

It will be updated monthly. ■

## Managed care expands to Harris County

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health care with long-term care which is often needed by this population.

The HMO finalists were chosen based on applications submitted in response to the Texas Department of Health's (TDH) Request for Applications. Here are some facts about the new system:

- ◆ Each HMO has a network of physicians and other health care providers.
- ◆ Patients may choose among the HMOs and will select a primary care provider from their HMO's network.
- ◆ Some patients will have the option to choose the state's primary care case management (PCCM) model instead of one of the HMOs.

STAR clients will be served by AmeriHealth, CareFIRST, PCA, ACCESS, AMERICAID, HMO Blue, Community Health Choice, Inc., which will contract with TDH. STAR clients will also have the option of choosing the state-administered PCCM Plan. STAR+PLUS clients will be served by ACCESS, AMERICAID and HMO Blue. DHS will administer the STAR+PLUS contracts. The Texas Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation (TXMHMR) will work with TDH to administer parts of the contracts dealing with behavioral health.

Transforming the state's Medicaid program into a managed care delivery system is becoming a reality across Texas. The two pilot programs which began in Travis

County and the tri-county area of Chambers, Jefferson, and Galveston in 1993, have shown improved access to care and cost effectiveness. As a result, the tri-county pilot was expanded in December 1995 to include three additional counties (Liberty, Hardin and Orange) and is now referred to as the Southeast Region. In September 1996, the Travis County pilot was expanded to include seven contiguous counties and the Bexar County SDA was implemented. In October 1996, the state implemented the Lubbock County SDA and the Tarrant County SDA, bringing the number of Medicaid recipients in Medicaid managed care to approximately 280,000 (about 14% of the total Medicaid population).

In Harris County, STAR will serve more than 200,000 Medicaid clients. Also, about 65,000 Harris County residents will be eligible for STAR+PLUS. "Harris County will almost double the number of Texans we now serve with Medicaid managed care rather than traditional Medicaid," said Dr. Michael D. McKinney, Health and Human Services Commissioner. "So, this is a very important step toward implementing managed care statewide," adds McKinney.

By switching from the current Medicaid payment system (called fee-for-service) to these managed care arrangements, Texas will help control costs in a way that provides patients proper treatment while promoting better preventive care. ■

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# Forging family ties in Texas: The Families are Valued Project

Keeping families and their children with disabilities together is a key goal of the Families are Valued Project. The project reflects a basic philosophy: all children belong in families and all children need sound family relationships for healthy development.

Served through the State Office of Community Resource Coordination Groups (CRCGs) of Texas which is housed at the Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC), Families are Valued represents a collaborative effort by several organizations statewide to further family and community support to children with developmental disabilities. Using the philosophy and practices of permanency planning, the project focuses on program development to build on existing resources and practices that will keep families together; reunite families with their children who have been placed

outside the home; and develop family options such as shared parenting, foster care and adoption as an alternative to placement in nursing homes, state schools and group homes.

Funded through the Texas Planning Council for Developmental Disabilities, the project is designed to strengthen families through the broadening of home and community support options, develop foster care and adoption programs as an alternative to institutional placement and promote cost-effective policies and practices.

Helping children with developmental disabilities obtain services and support they need while growing up at home is the project's aim. Often times children with disabilities move into institutional settings like state schools and nursing homes to receive services that could easily be provided at home.

"We are committed to ensuring that children with disabilities in Texas have a family. We want to make sure they experience the joy and comfort of lifelong relationships, the opportunity to be part of a community, and above all, the chance to be in a loving and nurturing environment," said Project Coordinator Yolanda Montoya.

Participating organizations include the Children with Severe Disabilities Workgroup, State CRCG Team, Texas Association of Licensed Children's Services, ARC of Texas, United Cerebral Palsy, health and human services agencies, parents, advocacy groups and local communities.

The project site has established three family support collaborative sites which will work with local agencies and organizations to increase awareness of children with disabilities, analyze and broaden community services, establish best practices for case management and case review.

The three sites working on the project are the Austin Travis County MHMR Center, Central Gulf State Operated Community MHMR in Richmond and Uniting Parents of Amarillo. A fourth site from the border region will be added in September 1997.

For more information, please call Yolanda Montoya at 512/424-6528 or visit our Website at [www.hhsc.state.tx.us/crcg/crcg.htm](http://www.hhsc.state.tx.us/crcg/crcg.htm). ■

## Head Start joins UT center

The Texas Head Start State Collaboration Project has been transferred from the Health and Human Services Commission to The University of Texas at Austin's Charles A Dana Center. According to Project Director Gwen Chance, the relocation of the program compliments the Center's existing initiatives and strengthens the early care and education

component of the Center which is dedicated to achieving equity and excellence at all levels of public education. The Texas Head Start Project is dedicated to the optimal development of all children by coordinating quality services for children and their families.

For additional information, contact Gwen Chance at 512/232-2258. ■

# Third Notice

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State law requires us to update our mailing list once a year. So, if you would like to continue receiving future issues of *The Service Connection*, please fill out the form below and return it to:

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**P. O. Box 13247, Austin, Texas 78711**

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Dr. Michael D. McKinney, Commissioner.

*The Service Connection* informs consumers, advocates, health and human services agencies and service providers about agency goals and initiatives. 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 512/424-6500 (Voice) or 512/424-6597 (TDD). To obtain this newsletter in alternate format, call or write the Commission.

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