



Colorado Covering Kids and Families

Best Practices in CHP+ Administration: the Community Perspective on Needs for the Future

Colorado Covering Kids and Families (CKF) has gathered input about strengths of Colorado's SCHIP program, the Child Health Plan *Plus* (CHP+). CHP+ outreach and enrollment specialists as well as Operations and Fiscal Directors of Community Health Centers participated in this process. These community members identified key practices by which the Colorado Department of Health Care Policy and Financing (HCPF) and Child Health Advocates (CHA/PSI, the CHP+ administrator before August 2003) support a family-friendly administration of the program.

Utilization of community partners. HCPF and CHA/PSI's local approach to CHP+ outreach and enrollment is integral to the program successfully enrolling families. The local focus encourages trusting relationships between potential clients and the CHP+ program; this trust is especially important in building relationships with communities of color. HCPF and CHA/PSI use two unique approaches to community partnership: the *CHP+ Grants Program* and the use of *Satellite Eligibility Determination Sites*.

Since October 2000, the CHP+ administrator has made grants (\$7,000-30,000) to community organizations to do CHP+ outreach and enrollment. The *CHP+ Grants Program* funds projects statewide and focuses on geographic area (such as a target county) as well as specific, difficult to reach populations (such as children living with grandparents). Many CHP+ Grants recipients form community-based coalitions through which to accomplish their work. These coalitions bring together a number of interested partners to develop specific, integrated solutions for the community

CHA/PSI also pioneered the *Satellite Eligibility Determination (SED) Site* program. SED Sites are outstationed eligibility determination sites for CHP+. They expand eligibility determination beyond the central office by locating eligibility

determination sites in community health projects across the state. These agencies share access to CHP+'s computerized eligibility and administration system and are reimbursed for correctly determined applications. The SED Site program has allowed already-existing community programs to build upon their trust their with clients to encourage participation in CHP+. Allowing community programs to participate in the state's eligibility system encourages enrollment among clients who are wary of government systems and simplifies the process for community health providers.

An additional partnership is provided by both the state and CHA/PSI: the three Medicaid eligibility workers that are stationed at the contractor's office. The transfer of joint applications between CHP+ and Medicaid processing has been a concern of the community for some time. It wastes time and increases the potential for applications to get lost in the process. The state Medicaid eligibility workers at CHA/PSI are immensely valuable to the community.

Technical Assistance. Community members working in outreach and enrollment appreciate the technical assistance provided by CHA/PSI. Members of the SED Site program and other community agencies that provide CHP+ enrollment assistance have *access to C-CHAMP*, the on-line enrollment and administration system for CHP+. Having access to C-CHAMP is pivotal to successful outreach and enrollment efforts. It allows community-based programs to track their clients' applications through the enrollment process to ensure that clients' do not slip through the cracks of the enrollment system. Access to C-CHAMP also allows enrollment assistants to track families when they become insured, which is important for follow-up work like renewal assistance.

HCPF and CHA/PSI make reports and *enrollment numbers* available to outreach projects. Access to enrollment numbers is

central to the planning and administration of a good outreach program. The recent change from county-based reporting to regional figures illustrates this point, as many community programs have scrambled to find new ways to measure the efficacy of their actions.

Community members also appreciate the *frequent communications and updates about program changes* that CHA/PSI provides to members of its programs. These help programs stay current with changes to CHP+, which paves the way for better client services. An example of this is the SED Site memo and email list, which is available to other community partners as well.

An excellent *training program about CHP+* is available to outreach and enrollment workers. CHP+ trainings are free and open to interested community partners. Many community health programs see high turnover in their staff, and the regular CHP+ trainings are very important for maintaining program consistency. Because CHP+ trainings occur several times a month, new staff have adequate training before they provide application assistance for clients. The availability of this training program also promotes statewide consistency for those providing application assistance and messages about CHP+ to the community.

Staff accessibility. Outreach and enrollment workers appreciate the accessibility of CHP+ staff. A number of *CHP+ staff are available to provide assistance* when programs have questions or concerns. It is generally easy to reach many CHP+ staff with questions.

CHA/PSI staff have a strong presence in the community. Many coalitions have formed around CHP+ outreach, and CHA/PSI staff regularly attend these coalition meetings to provide updates and ensure that the community is getting the most accurate information. Outreach and enrollment workers appreciate seeing CHP+ staff; their input is considered a crucial part of any meeting.

Coming changes. The members of Colorado CKF recognize that we are in a time of financial stress. The State of Colorado is making difficult decisions about the future of its programs.

Colorado CKF believes that, within existing financial and programmatic constraints, many of the basic strengths of the current program can be preserved. In particular, the membership of the Colorado CKF Coalition feels that maintenance of the following activities is crucial to the continued success of the program:

Use of community partnerships. Working with community-based programs is central to successfully insuring Colorado's families with CHP+. To achieve this, the Colorado CKF Coalition advocates for:

- Continuation of the **SED Site program** or a similar model of community-based eligibility determination
- The placement of the **3 state Medicaid eligibility workers** at the offices of the CHP+ contractor

Information sharing between HCPF, the CHP+ contractor, and community agencies.

This encompasses a number of things:

- **Access to C-CHAMP** helps provide community programs with information necessary to provide better support to families.
- **Frequent and ongoing trainings and communication** provided by the CHP+ contractor.
- **Regularly scheduled communication between CHA/PSI staff and community members.**

Colorado Covering Kids and Families is part of a national initiative to improve health insurance coverage for children and families. Our focus is identifying and removing barriers to children and families' access to public health insurance programs. We partner with agencies that conduct outreach to help increase enrollment into Medicaid and CHP+ and bring together advocates to improve the programs.

With a statewide membership, the Colorado Covering Kids and Families Coalition is building a long-term, sustainable movement to improve access to public health insurance in Colorado. Colorado Community Health Network, in conjunction with Catholic Charities and Colorado Children's Campaign, leads this effort.

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