



HCHA Newsletter

Harris County Healthcare Alliance

February 2008
Volume 1, Issue 2

Reminder...

2008 Quarterly

Membership Meeting

Speakers:

Maureen Milligan

HHSC Deputy Chief of Staff
Medicaid Reform Project Lead

Dr. Bill Rago

Director of Economic Analysis

Medicaid Reform Update

February 13

3:00-5:00

United Way, Community
Resource Center
50 Waugh Drive, Houston,
Texas 77007

Inside this issue:

HCHA/GTC...	2
Mark Your Calendars	2
Clinic Strategic Assessment	2
Public Policy Platform	2

Grant Submitted to HHSC to Fund 3-Share

Funding in the amount of \$700,000 has been requested by The Texas Communities Healthcare Coalition from the Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) for the implementation of three-share plans in the Galveston, Houston, Dallas, Central Texas, and El Paso communities. The Coalition, comprised of community/county participants representing Houston, Central Texas, Galveston, El Paso, North Texas and San Antonio, submitted the proposal in November 2007 in an effort to develop market-based solutions for the high rate of uninsurance among employees of small firms. The Coalition represents well over 50 percent of the State's uninsured, and the five participating communities span a wide variation of demographic profiles, available resources, and readiness levels.

The Harris County Healthcare Alliance will manage this award on

behalf of the Coalition with assistance from a 14-member Grant Oversight Committee drawn from the top leadership of the five collaborating community organizations. *If funded grant activities will kick off in March with enrollment in 3 share programs beginning in each of the Coalition Communities in 2008 or 2009. Continued Coalition activity thereafter will enable the communities that are more advanced in terms of three -share development to act as mentors and leaders to other communities around the state.*

For Harris County, grant funding will accelerate development of three-share plans so that coverage can be offered in January 2009. The grant will also provide technical assistance to other coalition members building upon the work of those farther along in three share development and creating efficiencies across the state via joint contracting/purchases, and shared lessons learned.

The use of three share models to

increase health coverage of employees of small firms will have benefits beyond simply assuring coverage. That coverage will translate to: improved health of the employees and their families; reducing the demand for state-funded programs such as Medicaid; encouraging economic development through a healthier and more productive workforce; and laying the groundwork for innovative solutions that can be replicated statewide.

Pilot projects funded by this grant will allow the participating communities to make a compelling case to their local stakeholders, including funders, to sustain the progress made toward providing health benefits to employees of small employers.

Alliance activities will include: identification of targeted small employers; completion of actuarial analysis; development of marketing and

(continued pg.2)

TDI Also Issues RFP for 3-Share Programs – TCHC Applies

Four of the six communities (Houston, Central Texas, El Paso, North Texas) comprising The Texas Communities Healthcare Coalition submitted a similar \$660,000 grant proposal to the Texas Department of Insurance in January 2008 to support design and implementation of three-share premium assistance programs to increase access to private healthcare coverage for

the uninsured. The Alliance' portion of the request is \$175,000 which will be utilized to further development of Houston's three-share product. The Alliance's total start-up and operational expense for the three-share program is estimated at \$855,517 for the period Jan. 08 — Aug. 09.

Local safety-net providers (hospitals and community health

centers) are anticipated to benefit under the three-share program by the resulting increase in patients who have a payer source for their care. The three-share program will encourage the utilization of medical homes by enrollees, thereby improving the early preventive and primary care provided to enrollees. Over time, this will result in less utilization by these enrollees of high-cost services in

the emergency room and acute hospital.

The TDI grant will also fund an analysis of the economic impact of the three-share programs on their communities which will be key for continued legislative support for the programs.

HCHA/Gateway To Care Agreement

After year-long merger discussions between the two organizations, the Harris County Healthcare Alliance and Gateway to Care boards have agreed to sign an affiliation agreement. This affiliation agreement will outline the specific programs and activities of the two organizations that are significantly aligned and key to the success of both organizations in fulfilling its mission. The Agreement will also describe the relationship between the boards of the two organizations and their commitment to complementary strategic planning, fundraising and operations. A Joint Collaborative Committee initially comprised of the Board members who studied the proposed merger and the organizations' two Executive Directors, will meet periodically to

facilitate that envisioned cooperation and collaboration.

The Boards recognize that at this time the missions of their organizations are best served by remaining independent but closely affiliated. The Alliance/Gateway Work Group studied the missions, visions, goals and programs of the two organizations in depth, finding some areas of overlap and some distinct areas of coordinated focus. Its recommendation was that achieving the missions of each of the two organizations requires the dedicated attention of separately focused boards. Gateway to Care through its collaborative consisting of providers, advocacy organizations, and other affiliated organizations will maintain its focus on achieving access to care for all by operating programs designed to

assist individuals and their providers in the Harris County region. Harris County Healthcare Alliance will maintain its focus on facilitating collaboration among providers to achieve policy development and planning. Both organizations are necessary to achieve the organizations' shared vision for improved delivery of healthcare in the Houston/Harris County region.

Specifically included in the affiliation agreement will be a statement recognizing Gateway to Care's Navigator Training Institute and a core group of centrally managed community navigators, the Provider Health Network, and the Common Management Information System as programs integral to the creation and maintenance of a comprehensive, coordinated system of healthcare delivery. These Gateway programs are particularly aligned with the goals of the Alliance and support its member organizations. To support the region's community health centers, the Alliance will purchase from Gateway to Care the services of a program manager responsible for implementing the Common Management Information System. As part of the agreement, Gateway to Care will support the Alliance's role in Harris County as a leading health system planning group, developer of affordable local health coverage models, and a health care public policy voice.

Clinic Strategic Assessment

Health Management Associates (HMA), recognized as leaders in providing operational, financial and strategic analysis for FQHCs and other ambulatory care providers, has been chosen as the consultant to conduct the Strategic Assessment of Houston's primary care safety net clinics. HMA will work directly with Alliance and clinic staff to obtain information that will result in the production of individual clinic-specific reports to be used as a guide for clinics to achieve and maintain optimal performance. The aggregate report will benefit the entire Alliance

membership by giving them access to information regarding the performance and effectiveness of a major piece of the comprehensive healthcare system we seek to create. The manifestation of this system can only be brought about if Alliance membership is informed about each component of the system.

The strategic assessment is only one of the Alliance's approaches to bringing forth the vision of having a comprehensive, coordinated system in Houston/Harris County that meets the healthcare needs of its residents.

Cont'd—HHSC

sales plans; and other initial administrative start-up costs. HCHA's estimated portion of the \$700,000 award to perform these activities is \$200,000 plus a share of \$50,000 for shared expenses among the five communities.



Alliance' Legislative Committee Public Policy Platform *Highlights*

The following are a few highlights from the Alliance's recently adopted public policy platform, which includes issues prioritized for the 81st legislative session:

Support efforts to expand State funding for public behavioral health services and to allow for flexibility in how such funding is used by local providers

Support tax changes that encourage more employers to offer coverage/insurance for their employees and/or pay a reasonable percentage of the employee cost of coverage/insurance

Support efforts to lower the administrative costs of providing health insurance or coverage Support the development of Medicaid and CHIP buy-in programs for low-income families

Mark Your Calendars

Campaign 2008:

What Can the Next President Do to Reform U.S. Health Care?

Tuesday
February 26, 2008
6:00 pm

Speakers:

Karen Davis, Ph.D.

President
The Commonwealth Fund

Jonathan S. Skinner, Ph.D.

John Sloan Dickey Third Century
Professor of Economics, Dartmouth

For more information visit
www.bakerinstitute.org

Health Information Technology Summit

April 15 & 16

Speakers:

Robert Kolodner, M.D.

National Coordinator for Health
Information Technology, HHSC

Les Lenert, M.D.

Director of Centers for Disease
Control and Prevention's
National Center for Public
Health Informatics

For more information visit
www.nhit-shis.org
(866) 479-6439

Support public and private initiatives on the state, local and federal levels that will ensure adequate behavioral health services in our region for those in a crisis state as well as for prevention of crisis and maintenance of chronic behavioral health conditions.

(For the entire Public Policy Platform, visit the Alliance website at www.hchalliance.org)