Colorado Health and Health Care

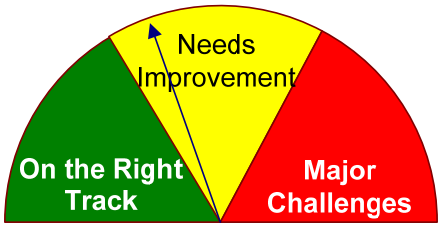
Focus: Medicaid Child Health

Colorado Department of Health Care Policy and Financing November 2009

Colorado Medicaid is a public health insurance program for low-income families, the elderly, and people with disabilities administered by the Colorado Department of Health Care Policy and Financing. It is the goal of Colorado Medicaid to improve the health and functioning of Medicaid clients by improving their access to quality, cost-effective health care services. *Colorado Health and Health Care* profiles examine the Department's progress in achieving that goal.

Medicaid and CHP+ Child Health in 2007

This issue of *Colorado Health and Health Care* looks at Colorado Medicaid's successes and challenges regarding children's health. In 2007 approximately 22% of children in Colorado received health care through Medicaid and CHP+. When all Colorado children are compared to national averages and goals set by Healthy People 2010, several areas of children's health emerge in which the Medicaid population either equals or exceeds the performance of comparison groups.



On the Right Track	Improvement Needed	Major Challenges
• Well-care visits • No injuries requiring medical care • Health care needs met • Obtaining dental care • Prevalence of ADHD • Caregiver concerns about developmental or behavioral problems	• Oral health problems • Physical activity*	• Overall health status • School sick days* • Exposure to tobacco smoke • Time watching television • Overweight or obese children* • Adolescent depression

On the Right Track

Well-care visits

The percent of children ages birth through 17 covered by Medicaid or CHP+ having at least one well-care visit was the same as children covered by private insurance: 91%. This figure is slightly above the rate of 89% for children nationwide.

No injuries requiring medical care

Only 6% of children covered by Medicaid or CHP+ had injuries requiring medical care during the year compared to children with private insurance and national rates (9% and 10%, respectively).

Health care needs met

Caregiver responses indicate that children on Medicaid or CHP+ had their care needs met nearly as often as their counterparts with private insurance (92% and 95%, respectively). Nationwide 93% of children's care needs were met.

Obtaining dental care

The proportion of children on Medicaid or CHP+ who had at least one preventive dental visit during the year was lower than children with private insurance and children nationwide (69%, 82% and 78%, respectively). These rates exceed the *Healthy People 2010* goal of 57%.

Prevalence of ADHD

The incidence of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) in children ages 2 through 17 years for children on Medicaid and CHP+ is 6% compared to an incidence rate of 6% for children with private insurance. Nationally 6% of children are diagnosed with ADHD.

Caregiver concerns about developmental or behavioral problems

Whether Medicaid, CHP+ or private insurance covers a child, 82% of caregivers report no concerns about developmental or behavioral problems for their children ages 4 months to 5 years. This rate is above the national Medicaid rate of 74%.

The majority of data in this profile is derived from the National Survey of Children's Health (NSCH) available at nschdata.org. The NSCH site is a project of The Child and Adolescent Health Measurement Initiative supported by Cooperative Agreement from the Maternal and Child Health Bureau (MCHB), Health Resources and Services Administration, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The NSCH sample included interviews of approximately 1800 Colorado caregivers. The data are weighted to represent the population of non-institutionalized children ages 0-17 nationally, and in each state. NSCH provides a caution when using cell sizes less than 50. Care has been taken to include only those metrics with a public health cell size greater than 50, except for Childhood Obesity, School Sick Days and Physical Activity, which have cell sizes of 30, 38 and 40, respectively.

Improvement Needed

Oral Health Problems
Children ages 1 through 17 on Medicaid or CHP+ have a slightly higher incidence of oral health problems (primarily dental caries) compared to children with private insurance (28% and 24%, respectively). Nationally, 24% of children have at least one oral health problem. The *Healthy People 2010* goal is 11%.

Physical activity*
A slightly greater proportion of children on Medicaid or CHP+ exercise at least 20 minutes per day every day compared to children with private insurance (31% and 27%, respectively). The *Healthy People 2010* goal is 85% of children vigorously exercising at least 20 minutes, 3 times per week or more.

Major Challenges

Overall Health Status
Fewer caregivers of children covered by Medicaid or CHP+ rated their children's health as excellent or very good compared to ratings from caregivers of children covered by private insurance (70% and 91%, respectively). Nationwide 84% of caregivers rate their children's health as excellent or very good.

School Sick Days*
More children age 6 to 17 years covered by Medicaid or CHP+ missed 6 or more days of school per year than did Colorado children covered by private insurance (27% and 18%, respectively). Nationwide 18% of children age 6 to 17 years missed 6 or more days of school per year.

Adolescent Depression
Colorado has the highest rate in the nation of youths ages 12 to 17 experiencing at least one major depressive episode in the past year (10%). The District of Columbia had the lowest rate of 7.5% and the U.S. average is 8.4%. This data is from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA) 2006 database.

Exposure to tobacco
More households of children covered by Medicaid or CHP+ have persons who use tobacco when compared to households of children with private insurance. The households of children on Medicaid or CHP+ have a rate of tobacco users nearly twice that of households with children covered by private insurance and children across the country (42%, 16% and 26%, respectively). The *Healthy People 2010* goal is 10%.

Overweight or Obese Children*
A greater proportion of caregivers whose children are covered by Medicaid or CHP+ report their children ages 10 though 17 are overweight or obese compared to caregivers' reports on children with private insurance and children across the United States (38%, 22% and 31%, respectively). The *Healthy People 2010* goal is 5%.

How We Are Addressing the Challenges

- **Establishing Medical Homes for children**
  The Department is piloting a program that provides pay-for-performance for those practices choosing to serve as children's Medical Homes.
- **Tobacco Cessation**
  Nicotine gum, lozenges and smoking cessation medications were added to the Medicaid formulary in 2006. The Department is looking to expand this benefit in 2010.
- **Overweight or Obesity**
  The Department has several activities planned for 2010: partner with 5 ALIVE! and Live Well Colorado to increase awareness of fitness and nutrition, partnering with the Colorado Academy of Family Physicians and the Colorado Clinical Guidelines Collaborative to develop and pilot a protocol for childhood overweight/obesity, and promote the use of overweight/obesity metrics by all providers in the state.
- **Increasing access to fluoride varnish**
  Fluoride varnish for children up to age 5 is now reimbursed if performed by trained medical providers as well as dental providers.
- **Increasing access to oral health assessments and examinations**
  The Department is now reimbursing trained medical providers to conduct oral health assessments and examinations.
  The Department is participating in the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment School-Based Health Center Program.

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