

# Arkansas Finish Line Coalition Meeting Notes

Monday, September 15, 2008 at 11:30 AM

Arkansas Children's Hospital

**Attendees:** Alejandro Aviles, Laura Byler, Leta Carreira, Steve Copley, Kevin Dedner, Elaine Dupree, Rebekah Dixon, Kohl Fallin, Cheryl Goad, Linda Greer, Christin Harper, Nancy Holder, Tereasa Holmes, Carol Hudgens, Roy Jeffus, Laura Kellams, Taylor Kent, Matt Knight, Tara Manthey, Laura McDowell, Errin McRae, Sheena Olsen, Ann Patterson, Connie Riley, Frank Scott, Ray Scott, Paula Smith, Rosi Smith, Mike Vogler, Kara Wilkins, Gwen Williams, Lorie Williams, Chad Williamson, Elisabeth Wright-Burak, Bob Young

## **Finish Line Coalition Goals:**

- *Reduce the number of eligible, un-enrolled children from 44,000 to 22,000 during the three year time grant period. The Coalition, including local outreach partners, will identify barriers and develop strategies to reduce or eliminate them.*
- *Expand ARKids Eligibility from 200 to 300 percent of poverty. The Coalition will consider expansion options and educate partners across the state about the importance of children's access to health insurance.*
- *Develop a buy in program for families at and above 300 percent of the poverty line. The Coalition will work with state officials to consider strategies allowing families to buy into either the current ARKids First program or a program with similar benefits.*

**Location:** Arkansas Children Hospital – Cress Board Room, 800 Marshall St., Little Rock, AR 72202-3591

### **I. Welcome (Elisabeth Burak)**

Elisabeth Burak began the meeting at 11:35 AM. She briefly reintroduced the Finish Line project and provided data about uninsured children in Arkansas. She noted that many have been concerned not just about lack of health insurance among children but also lack of access to services even once they are on ARKids or other insurance. Speakers today are intended to offer what DHS is already doing to address capacity to pave the way for future conversations.

### **II. Efforts to Address Services Access**

*DHS Medical Home initiative.* Dr Bill Golden, Medical Policy Director, DHS Division of Medical Services, spoke of the medical home model, efforts to implement or move toward the model nationally. A group of leaders within DHS is meeting regularly to put together a new medical home initiative and is in early stages of work. He spoke of hopes of where DHS and Arkansas can move in the future to ensure services and activities are aligned, of high quality, and responsive with the needs of families and children. Dr. Golden's presentation can be viewed at [Link to be provided at next Finish Line meeting]

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*Medicaid recent and upcoming initiatives* – Ms. Sheena Olson, DHS Division of Medical Services, spoke about proposed changes to Medicaid that to streamline services and reimbursement rates.

- **Bonus payments to providers who boost EPSDT rates.** Last year, DHS began offering bonus payments to providers who perform Early Periodic Screening and Diagnosis Testing (EPSDT) for their practice at a rate above the statewide average. Bonus payments will fall into two tiers: 1) over 5 % of the statewide EPSDT rate; and 2) 10% above the state average will become a two tier program providing more money
- **EPSDT/well-child rate increase.** DHS is proposing to increase the overall EPSDT/well-child screen reimbursement rate from \$56.00 to \$79.00, which including well child screens covered under ARKids B. The ages when children would receive these screens would be at 30 months, 7 years, and 9 years.
- **Additional rate incentives for developmental screens with standardized instruments.** DHS also seeks to implement the results of the Assuring Better Child Health Development (ABCD) initiative, which piloted use of a standardized assessment tool in two practices (Little Rock and Stuttgart). Under this program providers could be reimbursed an additional \$10,000 above the EPSDT/well-child rate if they perform a developmental screen using a standardized screening tool to identify possible developmental delays. (the ABCD project used the Ages and Stages tool, which DHS will offer technical assistance support for, but providers can choose to use other tools from a list of approved standardized tools). The ages that children would receive these standard screens would be 9, 12, 18, and 24-30 months.
- **Additional rate incentives for autism screens.** Similar to the developmental screens, DHS plans to offer an additional \$10 rate increase Screenings for autism would occur at 18 and 24 months.

Estimated timeline (which may change) is January 1, 2009 for rate increases and developmental and autism screens.

The group then moved on to further discuss issues of access to services/capacity. Elisabeth posed the question, "What can we do to address capacity while also expanding a safety net for more uninsured kids?" Participants shared different ideas that are being discussed to alleviate this issue.

- Bob Young from Healthy Connections, Inc. commented on the National Service Health Core Program, which assists health professionals in underserved areas who still have qualifying educational loans to be paid.
- Paula Smith of the Arkansas Department of Education also commented on tuition reimbursement or loan forgiveness for nurse practitioners who help to fill gaps in rural communities.

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- Rebekah Dixon of South Arkansas Regional Health Center commented that these programs often have an extensive application process and asked whether physicians would have to join existing group practices or would loan forgiveness also apply to those with private practices.
- Roy Jeffus, Medicaid Director at DHS acknowledged that DHS recognizes that there is a capacity issue and they are working to find solutions but there are broader program issues.

### III. **ARKids First Expansion (Goals 2 and 3) (Elisabeth Burak)**

Elisabeth noted that everyone should have received two handouts, a fact sheet on expansion and a policy brief from Georgetown University. Elisabeth noted that the latest estimated cost for expansion would be \$8.8 million with \$2.7 million covering any new enrollees and \$6.1 million going towards children who were eligible before (Note these figures have been updated for new uninsured data since this meeting). Updated uninsured data from the Annie E. Casey Foundation is coming soon. A number of organizations have publicly signed on to the Finish Line Coalition and will be mentioned on websites, publications, emails, etc. Organizations that have signed on as of September 23, 2008 are: Arkansas Academy of Family Physicians, Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families, Arkansas Children's Hospital, Arkansas Head Start Association, Arkansas Hospital Association, Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance, Arkansas Interfaith Alliance, American Academy of Pediatrics- Arkansas Chapter, Benefit Bank of Arkansas, Community Health Centers of Arkansas, Easter Seals Arkansas, Mental Health Council of Arkansas, and New Futures for Youth, Inc. If any other groups are interested but must first receive permission from their board, please contact Elisabeth Burak at [eburak@aradvocates.org](mailto:eburak@aradvocates.org) or (501) 371-9678.

### IV. **Story Bank Initiative – Partnership with the Clinton School of Public Service**

Clinton School Students Alejandro Aviles, Kohl Fallin, and Chad Williamson are conducting their practicum project at Arkansas Advocates for the upcoming academic year. They are working with the Arkansas Finish Line Project to create a Story Bank of uninsured, insured, and underinsured families throughout the state. They are asking for coalition members to distribute information about the project to potential families who may want to tell their story. They will travel to collect stories using various methods such as video and audio recording, emails, personal interviews, etc. Students are working on creating a more family friendly flyer to distribute. If a family is interested, it is preferred that the families contact the students at [storybank@aradvocates.org](mailto:storybank@aradvocates.org) or (501) 371-9678 Ext. 107. Roy Jeffus noted that they needed to be a push on collecting stories in order to ensure they are done in time for the January legislative session. Tara Manthey, Director of Communications for Arkansas Advocates, noted that this is a two part project. The first semester the students will focus on the stories themselves while the second semester will deal with evaluating the stories. If any coalition members need to reach the students, they can reach them at [aviles@clintonschool.uasys.edu](mailto:aviles@clintonschool.uasys.edu), [kefallin@clintonschool.uasys.edu](mailto:kefallin@clintonschool.uasys.edu), or [cdwilliamson@clintonschool.uasys.edu](mailto:cdwilliamson@clintonschool.uasys.edu). However, please encourage families to use the [storybank@aradvocates.org](mailto:storybank@aradvocates.org) address for any correspondence.

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There will be several Arkansas Finish Line Outreach Health Insurance Forums being held throughout the state of Arkansas over the next few weeks:

**El Dorado:** 11 a.m. Sept. 26 at South Arkansas Regional Health Center. Contact Rebekah Dixon at [rdixon@sarhc.org](mailto:rdixon@sarhc.org) or (870) 864-2423.

**Jonesboro:** 10 a.m. Sept. 29 at Mid-South Health Systems, 2707 Browns Lane. Contact Cheryl Goad at [cgoad@mshs.org](mailto:cgoad@mshs.org) or Matt Knight at [mknight@mshs.org](mailto:mknight@mshs.org) or (870) 972-4000.

**Little Rock:** 11:30 a.m. Sept. 30 at North Little Rock United Methodist Church, 6701 John F. Kennedy Blvd. Lunch will be served Contact Kara Wilkins at [kwilkins@aradvocates.org](mailto:kwilkins@aradvocates.org) or (501) 371-9678, Ext 113.

## Upcoming Finish Line Forums

**Mena:** 11 a.m. Nov. 14 at 1310 Highway 71 N. Contact Leta Carreira at [icarreira@healthy-connections.org](mailto:icarreira@healthy-connections.org) or (479) 394-2332 Ext. 208.

**West Memphis:** 11 a.m. Dec. 3 at Crittenden Memorial Hospital. Contact Errin McRae at [EMcrae@uams.edu](mailto:EMcrae@uams.edu) or Taylor Kent at [LTkent@uams.edu](mailto:LTkent@uams.edu) or (870) 572-2727

**Springdale:** 11:30 a.m. Dec. 3 at the Washington County Health Department office. Contact Laura Kellams at [lkellams@aradvocates.org](mailto:lkellams@aradvocates.org) or (479) 927-9800

Please make plans to attend one if you can.

- V. **Next meeting:** (Note Time Change) Wed., Nov 19th – 11:00am – 12:30pm, Cress Board Room, Arkansas Children's Hospital