

The Pilot Site Progress

Covering Kids & Families Coalition Update

VOLUME 2, ISSUE 3

AUGUST 2004

Statewide Videoconference A Success!!

On July 16, 2004, Arkansas Advocates for Children & Families and the Covering Kids & Families Initiative teamed up to sponsor a statewide videoconference. This videoconference featured Jack Tiner, an eligibility expert from the State Department of Human Services. Mr. Tiner provided a training and Q & A concerning the ability for immigrant women to receive prenatal care through the Arkansas Medicaid program. This training was provided for health care providers, outreach specialists, community organizations and community leaders and anyone that works with the immigrant population. There were 44 in attendance at the site in Little Rock with 14 other sites on-line throughout the state. 200 were said to have attended. Thanks to all of the project sites for getting the word out about this conference!!



AACF STAFF UPDATE!!

Casey Pierce has taken LaCresha Newton's position and will be helping the Lake Village site with Outreach. LaCresha has taken a job with Girl Scouts of Ouachita Council. We wish her the best!!

Wild About Wellness in Texarkana

Last week AR K made a bus trip down to Texarkana to visit Darneish Edmonds and the Our Children First Coalition, for the annual Wild about Wellness Health Fair. The health fair was a huge success with over 2000 people in attendance. There were 30 to 40 booths and at least 100 volunteers. AR K even cut a rug. We want to see pictures of that. Great work Darneish and AR K.

VISTA Volunteer Hard At Work in Lake Village

Even through we lost Jo Ann Trotter we still have Gail Young, Ameri-corps Vista Worker, running in full speed. Gail has recruited another business, Big Ben's Truck Stop, to include the ARKids First application in with their hiring package. She has also gotten a commitment from the Crossett Water Dept. to include the ARKids 1-800 number on the monthly water bills. Gail has been targeting the area of Chicot, Drew, Desha, Ashley, Arkansas and Lincoln counties focusing on distributing re-enrollment posters and re-enrollment cards to daycare centers, housing authorities, apartment complexes, doctor's offices, libraries, health clinics, the local Department of Human Service office, schools, department stores, banks and many of the Mayor's offices. The Delta Project has also added two new doctors to the list that will be accepting ARKids First Insurance in the Dermott Area. Dr. Djuana Matthews Beruk is the new Dentist with Dermott Dental Office, which opened 07/12/2004, and Dr. Vogue with Family Practice Clinics which will be opening soon. Gail is doing a great job with outreach and if you have any ideas for Gail please contact her at gaily-oung03082004@yahoo.com.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS:

- ? August 13, 2004—Covering Kids & Families Coalition Meeting
- ? September 16-17, 2004—Project Site Retreat in Little Rock
- ? October 8, 2004—Covering Kids & Families Coalition Meeting

Update on the Process Improvement Project

By Sharon Benton

In the Fall of 2003, The RWJ Foundation decided to work with selected states on very specific projects involved in the Covering Kids & Families Initiative. Arkansas was one of the 13 states selected. Could this be because we have had such HUGE success in streamlining our application process and our application...who knows? RWJF approached AACF who in turn contacted DHS...and the Process Improvement Project was born. This project was created, designed and implemented by Derrick Easter (AACF), John Kennedy (State DHS), MaryJane Harris (Washington County DHS) and Sharon Benton (NWA ARKids Outreach). The goal was to reduce churning. Churning is defined as the closure of a case and the reopening of the same case within a 4 month time frame. We chose to focus on the number of ARKids 1st cases that were being closed and reopened. The project began in December 2003 in Washington County and has now grown to include Madison, Carroll and Benton Counties in NWA. The results are favorable and there has been a significant reduction in the number of case closures at time of renewal in each of the counties. RWJF is to be commended for using the methodology of starting small....very small, providing assistance and thoughts (via a monthly conference call w/ other states), and encouraging slow expansion.

Our PIP team has been able to modify, tweak, study, and collaborate in order to make progress and not to make one methodology fit all environments. We are calling all non returned renewals and are attempting to renew these folks via phone. What a great concept you say, and true it is...don't forget most of our parents are working folks. We modified our process to call in the evenings after 5 p.m. Folks would be home from work. True, but they are busy with meals, scouts, soccer etc. We have now developed a plan where calling takes place from 7-9 p.m. on Tuesday and Thursday evenings. More tweaking was necessary and we now leave a beeper number with all messages (whether w/ a person or on a machine) and a statement that a call back will occur within 10 minutes of receipt of the beep.

The initial reception in each county was somewhat less than enthusiastic. However, it should be recognized that folks soon realized that this project meant less time, measurably less time, spent re-enrolling ARKids eligible children. The county offices, then, appreciated the function of the PIP. We, as a team, are enjoying the process and the product and thank RWJF and AACF for making it possible.

“Our PIP team has been able to modify, tweak, study, and collaborate in order to make progress and not to make one methodology fit all environments”
-Sharon Benton



**MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR THE
PROJECT SITE
RETREAT!!!
September 16-17, 2004**

Don't Forget!!

**Information for the
Sept. newsletter is
DUE on
August 15th.**



WAY TO WORK TOGETHER!!

In West Memphis, Anita Saig is very busy coordinating with Ora Barnes, the director of the ABC and HIPPIY programs in Marianna. As a part of the ARKids First and Early Childcare outreach, Mrs. Barnes will give an ARKids Application to the parent or guardian of each child that enrolls in the ABC program. She will also distribute flyers and place posters in strategic places in Lee County. An article about Mrs. Barnes will appear in the Marianna newspaper. Keep up the good work, Anita & Ora!!

On July 31, Anita will participate in the Kid's Fair sponsored by Wee Parents, Inc. Anita has participated in this event before and says the turn out is quite impressive. Anita says, "It's a great way to meet families and community members that can spread the word about ARKids First."

Lake Village Hires New Outreach Coordinator

Artie McCoy has been selected as the Outreach Coordinator for Delta AHEC- South. She will be taking Jo Ann Trotter's position. Jo Ann is now the Healthcare Coordinator with the Delta Access Program in Star City. We will miss Jo Ann, but are excited about meeting Artie. **Welcome aboard Artie!!**

Letter From Fort Smith

By Mona Clemons

I will be making a transition from full time ARKids First outreach to a part time outreach until the end of the grant in December 2004. I will be moving on into a new position as the Director of the River Valley Tobacco Free Coalition July 1st. I'm excited to continue with the ARKids First on a part time basis. I have had nothing but wonderful experiences, and have loved every minute that I have spent as ARKids First Outreach Specialist. I will never lose my passion and the knowledge that I have for ARKids First. I will continue on even after December helping those that can benefit from this great program. I know I'll always be an ARKids advocate. I believe in this program and know that it is a tremendous benefit to the children it cares for within our state. I'm sad to see it come to an end and will miss all of the dear friends that I have made while in our coalition. This coalition empowers each member to make a huge impact within their own counties and organizations throughout the state of Arkansas. I have made wonderful memories and dear friends that I will miss. I give a big THANKS to my wonderful bosses, Mr. Bob Young and Ms. Doreen Brown, for having faith in me to do the job. To Rhonda Sanders and Derick Easter and others at Arkansas Advocates who have been so wonderful to me throughout my grant. One more thing, now everyone in the coalition will know that Sharon Benton is the loudest out of the pilot sites... not me... ha!ha!

Big hugs and farewell to all. God Bless Mona Clemons.

News From Northwest

In Northwest Arkansas, Sharon Benton has been working with great success to increase the "voucher" program to include yet more MD's. With each completed ARKids application, access to care for a sick child is 24 hours and most often on the same day.

Sharon is also working with those students meeting free and reduced lunch criteria. A community agency is filling 1,000 back packs for students meeting that criteria. ARKids applications will be included.

"I have had nothing but wonderful experiences, and have loved every minute that I have spent as ARKids First Outreach Specialist."

-Mona Clemons

-THANKS Mona, for all your hard work. We will miss you!!