



Maternal and Child Health Access

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MCH Access Monthly Meeting

Thursday, June 17, 2004 10 AM – 12 Noon

1111 W. 6th St., free parking - Entrance in rear, on 5th St. (see covered parking entrance)

Featuring: The Inimitable Frank Tamberello, LA Coalition to End Hunger and Homelessness Food and Welfare Issues – What has the Legislature proposed? What has the Governor proposed and what lies ahead? Plus: LA issues and efforts. Quarterly instead of monthly reporting for cash aid.

**Nancy Watson, Community Health Councils, “Update on Tenet Hospital Sales” (see flyer, enclosed)
Updates on AIM children to Healthy Families, Healthy Kids expansion, MCH Issues**

In this mailing:

- **“Bridging the Gaps”** – new MCHA effort!
- **State stops cutting off DE infants in Gateway! New CHDP form (attached) reflects change.**
- **6/27 - Dolores Huerta** speaking on immigrants
- **SB 1555** – to include maternity care in all health care coverage!
- **6-25 Tenet Hospitals Sale**
- **6-22 – Learn About Quarterly Reporting!**
- **LA Business Jrl - Medi-Cal Reconciliation!**

**Distributed May 20 (no expired flyers listed)
Call for copies (213) 749-4261:**

- **California Immigrant Welfare Collaborative** May Revise Update, 5-17-04
- **LA Times**, 5-20-04, “Giving Parents a Dose of Confidence”; 5-7-04, “CDC Links Birth Defect Drop to Folic Acid-Fortified Foods”; 5-19-04, “ERs to Stay Out of Immigration Checks and “Vaccines Don’t Cause Autism, Science Panel Says”
- **Sample letter to Governor re: proposed cuts in cash aid**
- **USA Today**, 5-18-04, “Health agency presents global plan to fight obesity”
- **Medi-Cal Fraud flyer with phone number**
- **Little Hoover Commission Report** – “Real Lives, Real Reforms: Improving Health and Human Services” find more info through LABBC website: www.labestbabies.org

Notes from meeting May 20: Speaker (by phone): Irma Michel and Sarah Soto-Taylor, Healthy Families: Moving newborns born to mothers on AIM into the Healthy Families program

Starting July 1, and for mothers enrolled into AIM by June 29, (since eligibility occurs 10 days later), babies born to mothers on AIM will be enrolled in Healthy Families rather than AIM. This will help the state enormously, since the Healthy Families program carries a federal match. The problem of AIM being up to 300% of poverty and Healthy Families only 250% was resolved by Tommy Thompson, Secretary of Health and Human Services, with an announcement June 10 that Healthy Families income levels will be raised to 300% for those infants born to AIM mothers, up to age two. (See announcement www.hhs.gov/news.)

Ms. Michel noted that once the baby is born, the mother is to notify their plan. The state EDS vendor will send a letter one month prior, “Don’t forget...”. The letter will also ask for the first month’s premium payment. If the mother fails to notify her plan, she can still enroll the newborn, but will have to make up past premiums. The baby will stay in the mom’s plan for the first two months, unless a transfer is requested or if any existing siblings are in a different Healthy Families plan. The new AIM handbook,

supposed to be ready by June 14, will have all this information, and MCHA will have a flyer at the meeting this Thursday about the changes.

No Midyear Status Reports for ANY pregnant woman!

Current Midyear Status Reports note that they do not have to be returned from pregnant women in pregnancy-related aid codes. However, the state is preparing an All-County Letter that says pregnant women in ANY aid code do not have to fill out nor return Midyear Status Reports. Disruptions in coverage for pregnant women should be appealed and complaints taken up the chain of command. We expect to have a copy of that All County Letter soon.

1931(b) now programmed into LA County's Computer System - LEADER - Impact on pregnant women will be seen

LA County has fully automated the 1931(b) program into LEADER, the county's computer system for government benefits. This means, however, that women in the Federal Poverty Level Program aid code categories (44), if they have no other children, might be switched to the 1931(b) aid code at six months of pregnancy if their income is low enough. 1931(b), being tied to old AFDC rules, makes pregnant women eligible only in their third trimester of pregnancy. The 1931(b) aid code 3N, however, is mandatory for managed care, unlike aid code 44. What this means is that some women whose income is low enough at six months' pregnancy will receive an enrollment packet sometime after that, at seven, eight or nine months of pregnancy. This is untenable. We cannot support and must oppose the potential disruption of care and person-hours that will go into ensuring that women's care is not disrupted. We want women to have the broad scope of benefits that 1931(b) will provide, but with a separate pregnancy aid code as is now done for medically needy and pregnancy cases.

Please join us in a sign-on letter, at the meeting or available by e-mail (contact Lynn or Martin).

For an update of the MCH Access-PACLAC Maternal and Child Health bill list, see www.labestbabies.org.

Voluntary managed care enrollees receive packets of information

As noted in our last mailing, ABD (aged, blind or disabled) Medi-Cal recipients will receive packets of managed care information without an enrollment form for medical care enrollment, but including a form for dental care enrollment! Please report any problems you see/have clients call the **Health Consumer Center** if they accidentally enroll in a plan or need help with unscrupulous enrollers: **1-800-896-3203**.

Medi-Cal "Reform" held off 'til August

The State Department of Health Services has decided to wait until early August to submit to the legislature their plan for Medi-Cal reform. According to reports from federal advocates, the state has continued to talk to Congressional Representatives about tiered benefits and "Oregon-like" solutions. MCHA and other groups are extremely concerned about the state's proposal and want to work with Community Health Councils, Western Center on Law and Poverty and others to make our voices, so united during the meetings the state held earlier this year, continue to be heard. Please contact Lynn at lynnk@mchaccess.org or Rhea Durr at Community Health Councils (rhead@chc-inc.org) if you would like to be more involved.

More information and state's communication with the feds at the meeting.

Folic Acid Works!

Severe brain and spinal birth defects have dropped a whopping 27% in the US since 1998 (*LA Times*, 5-4-04). The Centers for Disease Control has linked that fact to when the government starting requiring manufacturers to add folic acid to cereal, pasta, bread and flour. This is government at its best! It is amazing to see such a change in such a relatively short time. On to newborn screening! (SB 142 http://info.sen.ca.gov/pub/bill/sen/sb_0101-0150/sb_142_bill_20040503_amended_asm.html)