POLICY & PRACTICE

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States Boost Medicaid Rolls

The Department of Health and Human Services has awarded $206 million to 15 states for enrolling more uninsured children in Medicaid. Last year, the Children's Health Insurance Program Reauthorization bonuses totaled just $75 million to 10 states. To qualify, states must have adopted specific program features known to encourage Medicaid enrollment and retention and then document increases significantly beyond what would have been expected. States qualifying this year are Alabama, Alaska, Colorado, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Maryland, Michigan, New Jersey, New Mexico, Ohio, Oregon, Washington, and Wisconsin.

Less Fluoride Recommended

The Environmental Protection Agency and HHS have joined forces to lower the amount of fluoride in drinking water. Americans don't need as much from that source because they have others – from toothpaste to regular dentists' treatment – than weren't available when public water fluoridation was introduced decades ago. The two agencies announced in the Federal Register that they want to replace the currently recommended range of water fluoridation, 0.7-1.2 mg/L, to a single target of 0.7 mg/L. The action will leave enough fluoride in the water supply to prevent tooth decay but protect children's teeth from dental fluorosis. The announcement said that the HHS expects to finalize the proposed change this spring, based on the EPA's assessment of fluoridation needs.

Combination Vaccines Avoided

One in five pediatricians reported that inadequate reimbursement prevented them from using at least one of two combination vaccines studied, according to the RAND Corporation. The study looked at infant vaccines – the diphtheria and tetanus toxoids and acellular pertussis, hepatitis B virus and inactivated poliovirus (DTaP-HepB-IPV) vaccine and the DTaP, IPV, and *Haemophilus influenzae* type b (DTaP-IPV/Hib) vaccine. Although 78% of the 492 pediatricians surveyed said they used one or both of the combination vaccines, more than half said their practice did not receive adequate reimbursement for vaccines in general. More than one-fifth said they didn't use one of the combination vaccines either because of inadequate reimbursement for doses or for administration. Smaller practices were less likely to use the combination vaccines, as were those with fewer publicly insured patients and those in a state with a less generous vaccine-financing policy, the study said.

Grant Will Fund Residencies

The Josiah Macy Jr. Foundation has awarded $500,000 to the American Academy of Pediatrics for pediatric residency training initiatives to improve care for underserved children. The two organizations said the grant will support pediatric residency programs that teach community health and advocacy, train future leaders, enhance future pediatricians' involvement in caring for underserved populations, build community partnerships, and use

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technology effectively. "It is clear that skills and involvement for pediatricians in community pediatrics focused on improving the health of underserved children are desired and achievable, but more work needs to be done in order to provide effective training," said AAP President Dr. O. Marion Burton.

Food for Kids Found Wanting

Tests showed that 49 out of 58 supposedly healthy foods commonly marketed to children failed to meet at least one "healthy" standard, according to a study from the Prevention Institute. Food manufacturers increasingly use nutritional claims on the front of food packages to tout the foods as healthier choices. However, almost all the foods contained added sugar, and more than half qualified as high sugar, according to the institute's analysis. In addition, more than half were low in fiber and contained no fruit or vegetable. About one-fourth of the prepared foods contained too much saturated fat, and one-third contained too much sodium, according to the study. Foods evaluated included staples such as Campbell's Tomato Soup, Skippy Super Chunk Peanut Butter, and Rice Krispies.

FDA Seeks Pediatric Devices

The Food and Drug Administration is inviting grant proposals from nonprofit organizations to facilitate the development, production, and distribution of pediatric medical devices. "There currently exists a great need for medical devices designed specifically with children in mind," the agency said in its announcement. The grants, which will be issued by the agency's Office of Orphan Products Development, will go to "consortia whose business model and approach to device development will either result in, or substantially contribute to, market approval of medical devices designed specifically for use in children." However, the program won't support single-device projects, the agency said. Although the grant program is administered by the orphan products development office, it's intended to encompass devices for all conditions, not just rare diseases, the FDA said. Grant applications are due May 2.

–Jane Anderson