Health & Science

Oregon Health Plan expanding coverage to thousands of children and teens

The share of Oregon's children covered by health insurance, already ahead of the national rate, is expected to grow with July 1 start up of the new Children's Health Insurance Program combined with new outreach efforts.

The program, known by the acronym CHIP, was encouraged by the federal government to cover children who are older and who live in higher income households than were previously eligible for Medicaid coverage.

"This is another significant step in reaching Oregon's goal of broadening access to health care," said Hersh Crawford, state Medicaid director. "The outcome will be thousands of healthier children and families." The state share of CHIP costs will be financed by the 1996 voter approved increase in the state tobacco tax.

Newly eligible for Oregon Health Plan coverage under the Children's Health Insurance Program will be uninsured children and teens through age 18 if family income is under 170% of the federal poverty level. This means a child or teen under age 19 in a family of three would qualify for CHIP if household income falls below $1,934 a month.

Previously, Oregon Health Plan coverage was limited to people living in households below the federal poverty level ($1,138 for a family of three) and children through age 5 living in households up to 133% of the federal poverty level ($1,513 a month for a family of three).

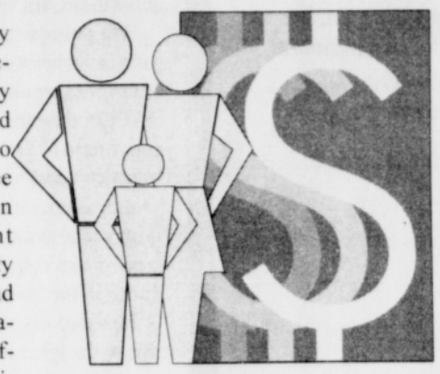
People wishing to apply for CHIP coverage may seek an Oregon Health Plan application by calling toll: 800-359-9517 (TTY:800-621-5260).

Legacy Health System Sets Aside $10 Million For Community Health Fund

Legacy Health System's Board of Directors has voted to establish a $10 million Community Health Fund as a key component of the organization's mission to improve the health of the community. Up to $500,000 per year will be available for two or three high priority community health projects.

"This fund represents an investment in prevention as well as health improvement.

It will be a permanent and stable source of funds for important health initiatives and programs capable of impacting the health of our community," according to James A. Perry, Chairman of the Board of Directors. The fund won't replace Legacy's long-standing practice of making smaller community donations and sponsorships through the use of operating funds.



The Community Health Fund represents efforts by Legacy's board and management team to put both a committee and funding source in place to augment Legacy's community health initiatives and to keep the organization focused on efforts that will positively affect people's health. According to Steve Johnson, Senior Vice President Continuum of Care, "Legacy has a history of rich investment in community services and programs. Development of this fund keeps us true to our mission as we enter the 21st Century."

Community Health Fund allocations will be determined by the Community Health Committee, a new committee of the Legacy Board. Committee members have already begun an assessment of community health needs and plan to identify specific areas of focus by this fall. The Committee is comprised of Legacy Board members, a physician, church-appointed representatives and community members.

Legacy Health System is the only Oregon-based, not-for-profit healthcare system in the state, and is the sixth largest private sector employer in the four-county Portland metropolitan area. Facilities within Legacy include four hospitals, a home health agency, primary care clinics and occupational medicine clinics. Legacy was formed in 1989 by the merger of several of the region's major hospitals and healthcare organizations.

Legacy Offers Lecture On Sleep Disorders

Do you have problems sleeping? Do you or your spouse snore? There may be an answer for you. Legacy Health System is sponsoring a free lecture on sleep disorders on Wednesday, July 29 from 7:00-8:30 pm at Legacy Good Samaritan Hospital Medical Center. The presenter is John J. Greve, MD, pulmonology and sleep medicine, who is a medical expert on sleeping disorders and director of the only certified sleep center in Portland, Legacy Good Samaritan Sleep Disorders Center.

He will be available to answer your specific questions on a serious problem for many Americans. In fact, more than 100 million Americans of all ages suffer from some type of sleeping disorder. Ten to 30% of adults snore.

Space is limited. Registration is required by calling 335-3500. Legacy Good Samaritan Hospital is located at 1015 NW 22nd Ave., Portland, OR, 97210.

'Pregnancy and the HIV Test': New Brochures Available in English, Spanish

HIV testing is crucial for pregnant women because the virus not only threatens the mother's health, it also can be passed to her baby before or during birth. If a pregnant woman tests positive for HIV, she can get treatment that will lower the chance of transmitting the virus to the baby and slow the impact of HIV on herself.

Two new brochures from the American Social Health Association, "Pregnancy and the HIV Test" and a Spanish version, "El embarazo y lay prueba del VIH," five sensitive, reassuring information for all women of child bearing age. The brochures explain how getting tested for HIV, the virus that causes AIDS, can help a woman protect her baby.

According to the brochures, the chance that an HIV positive woman will pass the virus to her baby before or during birth is about one in four. The odds are lowered significantly if the woman takes the drug AZT while she is pregnant.

To request a brochure, write to the American Social Health Association, Dept. PR90, P.O. Box 13827, Research Triangle Park, NC 27709, enclosing $1 for each copy to cover postage and handling. Specify the English or Spanish version.

Website for Teens Will Focus on Sexually Transmitted Diseases

Teenagers are at especially high risk for sexually transmitted diseases, accounting for an estimated one-fourth of new STD infections each year, yet surveys by the American Social Health Association reveal little knowledge among teens about STD's other than HIV/AIDS.

To help educate teens about STD risk and prevention, ASHA is developing a website especially for this age group, supported by grants from the Merck Company Foundation and the A.J. Fletcher Foundation.

"Nearly 80% of schools in this country have Internet access, and 65% of teens have Internet access at home," said Linda Alexander, ASHA president and chief executive officer. "However, there are no websites dedicated to STD information especially for teens. We see this as an incredible opportunity to reach young people with information about STD risk and prevention, through a modality they will use and enjoy."

The teen website will be complete and publicized in spring 1999. General STD information currently available on ASHA's website, www.ashastd.org.

In creating the website, ASHA draws on its decades of experience educating the public about STDs. A national, nonprofit organization founded in 1914, ASHA operate three hotlines under a federal contract: the CDC National AIDS Hotline (800-342-8437; Spanish 800-344-7432; TYY for the hearing impaired, 800-243-7889); CDC National STD Hotline (800-227-8922); and CDC National Immunization Information Hotline (800-342-2522; Spanish 800-232-0233). The program also operates the National Herpes Hotline (919-3618488) and support programs for people with genital herpes and human papillomavirus.

Information About Your Medicare Or Medigap Insurance Policy

Do you need information about your Medicare or Medigap insurance policy? Are you having difficulty making decisions about additional coverage? Is Medicare's explanation of benefits confusing?

Providence St. Vincent Medical Center can help. An experienced volunteer trained by the State Health Insurance Benefits Assistance (SHIBA) program, Pat Fullenwider, is now on site one day a week to answer your questions. For a free appointment, call (503) 216-2655, or stop by the Health Resource Center, located in the lobby of the medical office building at Providence St. Vincent (entrance A).

You've spent your whole life paying into Medicare.

Here's how to make sure you get something back.

$0 Plan Premium
No Deductibles
100% Medically necessary hospitalization
$10 Office visits
Preventive services

You worked, you paid, you worked, you paid, and on it went. And all the while, you expected that a comprehensive health plan would be there to take care of your needs upon retirement.

Fortunately, there is such a plan. It's called Secure Horizons. And Secure Horizons specializes in the health care needs of Medicare recipients. In fact, we actually provide more benefits than traditional Medicare does.

How? As a Medicare contracting plan, we provide health care coverage—hospitalization, physician visits and vision care—to Medicare recipients. In exchange, the U.S. Government pays us to provide benefits above and beyond those offered by traditional Medicare. You simply designate your Medicare premium to be applied to your Secure Horizons plan, and that's it.

As a result, you receive more health care coverage while not having to worry about high plan premiums, deductibles or loads of paperwork.

To find out why more Medicare beneficiaries depend on us, simply attend one of the meetings below. A sales representative will be on hand to answer your questions. Or, call us at 1-800-728-8158 or TTY 1-800-257-5799. We'll explain how you can use your Medicare dollar to get the health care coverage you've been missing.

And, you'll be happy to know, we contract with what we believe to be one of the finest, most convenient networks of private practice physicians available.

Perhaps this is why Secure Horizons has become the largest Medicare risk plan in the nation—with 90,000 members in the Northwest alone.

SecureHorizons®
Offered by PacifiCare of Oregon

Secure Horizons is offered by PacifiCare which is a federally qualified HMO with a Medicare contract. Anyone with Medicare may apply. Members must use contracting plan providers. Plan premiums and benefits vary by county. Beneficiaries must continue to pay Part B premium or Medicare premium.

HealthFirst Medical Group - Broadway
Conference Room
265 N. Broadway, Portland
Tuesday, July 21
1:00 p.m.

This location is wheelchair accessible. Please contact us at least 72 hours in advance if you have specific needs. A sales representative will be present with information and applications.

Questions? Call 1-800-728-8158 (TTY 1-800-257-5799)

Refreshments will be served.

980021