

## HOW TO WORK WITH HEALTH PLANS AND CHILDREN'S HEALTH INITIATIVES

### Introduction

The success of individual CHK projects will depend in part upon the active involvement of the health plans offering Medi-Cal and/or Healthy Families in a community, as well as the involvement of the Children's Health Initiatives (CHIs) that operate in the twenty-five counties with CHIs. CHK staff will assist in connecting city or county participants with the health plans and CHIs. In most cases, representatives from the health plans and/or the CHIs will handle the actual enrollment process, which can be time consuming and complex.

### Who Provides No and Low Cost Health Insurance to Children of Working Families:

- **Medi-Cal**

Medi-Cal is California's Medicaid health care program. This program is for working and non-working families. It covers children from birth to age 21. It provides comprehensive medical, dental and vision benefits. A family of four with an annual income of up to \$21,204 may qualify for Medi-Cal.

- **Healthy Families Program (HFP)**

The Healthy Families Program is the State's low cost health insurance for children and teens. It covers children from birth to age 19. The HFP provides health, dental and vision coverage to children who do not have employer sponsored insurance and do not qualify for free Medi-Cal. A family of four, with an annual income of up to \$53,004 may qualify for HFP. The State and Federal government provide funding for the HFP.

- **Children's Health Initiatives (CHIs)**

Twenty-five counties have outreach and enrollment programs known as "Children's Health Initiatives" (CHIs). (Cont.)

CHIs offer comprehensive health insurance (medical, dental and vision coverage) for children ages 0-18 from families with incomes up to 300% of the Federal Poverty Level and for those ineligible for public programs (i.e., Medi-Cal or Healthy Families). In addition, CHIs enroll eligible children into publicly funded programs like Medi-Cal and Healthy Families.

### Key Tips to Remember for Working with Health Plans and CHIs:

- **Make connections early.**



If you are considering a project or event, be sure to reach out early in the planning process to the health plans and/or CHIs that offer affordable health insurance for children in your area. CHK can help you connect with them. The CHK website includes a list of which health plans operate in each county and which counties have CHIs.

- **Is there a CHI in Your Area?**

Twenty-five counties have Children's Health Initiatives actively engaged in outreach and enrollment of eligible children. Be sure to check the CHK website to see if one is operating in your county. If so, be sure to contact the CHI early in the process to engage them in your planning. It may be that your community has already been contacted by the CHI to explore collaboration.

- **Learn from past experiences.**

Health plans and CHIs have valuable experience and suggestions to offer as you plan your projects or events. Because they have been active in previous outreach and enrollment events, they can share with you lessons learned and new approaches so that you can avoid duplications and learn from past efforts.

## HOW TO WORK WITH HEALTH PLANS AND CHILDREN'S HEALTH INITIATIVES (Cont.)

- **Invite ALL health plans and the CHI to any outreach or enrollment event.**

It is important to remember that state regulations covering Medi-Cal and Healthy Families require that all health plans that serve an area *must* be invited to any event, although not all may choose to participate. Some counties have Children's Health Initiatives (CHIs); be sure to include them when extending invitations to participate.

- **Consult early to avoid conflicting event dates.**

Some health plans or CHIs may not be able to attend if a scheduling conflict exists. In order to avoid potential conflicts, we suggest consulting early in the process with the health plans when selecting a date for an event or outreach meeting. Because CHK may be active in neighboring communities, CHI and health plan staff may be already committed to a possible event date. Our intent is to be respectful of the resource capabilities of the health plans.

- **Be clear on the purpose of the event or activity.**

To facilitate participation of the health plans and CHIs, be sure to give clear information about the intent of the event. It is helpful to provide information about the number of people you are expecting, the language of the participants, the location and hours of the event, whether there will be entertainment and whether the activity is part of a larger event (i.e., a stand alone event only about affordable insurance for children or part of a community health fair or holiday celebration). Also helpful is information about who else might be participating.

- **The health plan and CHI representatives are there to explain options.**

If this is an enrollment event, the health plan and CHI representatives are there to explain the options to the participants and assist with the enrollment applications. To make their work easier, try to locate those who will be assisting with enrollments at places with wireless internet access. Since enrollments can now be done electronically, this will assist in submitting electronic applications. Applicants generally must bring the following information with them to complete the application process:

- Birth certificate(s)
- Social security card(s)
- Proof of address
- Proof of income – most recent pay stub or last year's income taxes.
- Proof of pregnancy

- **Additional enrollment assistance is available from Certified Application Assistants.**

Certified Application Assistants (CAAs) are people from community organizations who have been trained to help out the joint Medi-Cal and Healthy Families application. The community organizations that CAAs work with are called Enrollment Entities (EEs). You can search for an Enrollment Entity in your area. The Enrollment Entity will find a CAA who can help you prepare the application.

To find an Enrollment Entity in your area, you may go to the Healthy Families website [www.healthyfamilies.ca.gov](http://www.healthyfamilies.ca.gov), click on "Get help with an application from a Certified Application Assistant (CAA)." At the bottom of the page you may enter your ZIP code and follow the instructions. You can also get help by calling 1-888-747-1222.

- **Setting up the enrollment event.**

In keeping with the need to treat all health plans in the same manner, it is important to ensure that all health plans and CHIs participating in an event are given the same vantage point for prospective clients. To the extent possible, tables should be located in same area. This way the families can make their way around to all the provider tables to pick up information.

- **Raffles or prizes?**

According to state regulations, health plans may contribute prizes to event sponsored drawings or raffles, with a cap of \$250.00 per prize as long as participation in the raffle is not contingent on filling out a HFP/MC application.

Health plans may also provide literature on benefits of the program, as well as give-a-way's like coloring books, crayons and pencils. Be sure to check with them when planning the event to ensure that they will be providing necessary literature.

- **After the event.**

If this is an event you would like to have again at another location or perhaps annually, you may be able to get a feel for which health plans would like to attend again. You may want to consider conducting a survey of the plan and CHI participants to see what worked, what didn't and what changes could be made. This tool can also be used as a gauge for who will participate again.

*Note: Communities for Healthy Kids thanks the individuals representing the managed care industry and Children's Health Initiatives for reviewing drafts of this document and providing us with valuable input*

## “HOW TO” TIPS FOR PARKS AND RECREATION OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

### What is Communities for Healthy Kids (CHK)?

The purpose of CHK is to increase the number of eligible children who are enrolled in no and low cost health insurance offered through Medi-Cal, the state’s Healthy Families Program or through one of the Children’s Health Initiatives (CHIs) offered in 25 counties. These are children from low income families – generally considered the working poor – who are not eligible for, and do not want to go on, welfare. In 2005, between 500,000 and 600,000 California children were eligible, but uninsured.

### Why promote through parks and recreation agencies?

It’s simple. Where there are kids, there are parents or caregivers. Your agency’s parks and recreation programs attract children (and their parents/caregivers) from throughout your community. Whether it is baseball, soccer, basketball, swim lessons, crafts classes, before or after school programs or dance classes – virtually any city or county sponsored recreation program for children – is a perfect opportunity to reach out to parents of children who may be eligible for no or low cost health insurance.

If your city or county is served by a special district that provides park recreation programs, consider collaborating with them to offer children’s health insurance information at district activities in your community.

### Key Steps to Follow:



#### 1. Decide what events or programs you wish to use as an outreach tool.

Do you offer a parents’ night for your youth sports leagues or for dance class participants? These are perfect opportunities for health insurance providers to talk with the parents or caregivers and offer enrollment assistance.

Does your city or county require kids who participate in publicly sponsored sports programs to have health insurance? Are there kids who cannot participate because their families don’t have insurance coverage? Then consider including health insurance information as part of the sports program registration package. Or, you might want to sponsor a kids’ health insurance information day for parents/caregivers during the first day of the sports activity, when parents/caregivers are present to sign up their kids.

Here are some parks and recreation related opportunities that might be right for a for CHK outreach and enrollment project:

- Instructional sports programs or leagues (baseball, basketball, soccer, tennis, swimming, tennis, skiing)
- Tiny tots play programs – swimming, dance, gymnastics
- Before and/or after school programs
- Crafts or dance lessons
- Community swimming pools
- Community Fourth of July celebrations
- Community wide special events
- Health insurance information at the department’s registration desk or at common areas of recreation facilities.

#### 2. Involve the health insurance providers in your area in planning and executing your activity.

It is helpful to include representatives from health insurance providers as you pick a date (or dates) for the outreach event. It is important to communicate early with the them so that your potential date does not conflict with another event at which they are committed to participate.

If you are in one of the 25 counties that has a Children’s Health Initiative (CHI), be sure to include them in the project. CHIs offer affordable health insurance to children who do not qualify for Medi-Cal or Health Families Program. A list of CHIs and contact information is available on the CHK website at [www.ca-ilg.org/chk](http://www.ca-ilg.org/chk) in the Resources and Tools section.

## “HOW TO” TIPS FOR PARKS AND RECREATION OUTREACH ACTIVITIES (Cont.)

Remember, state regulations require you to invite all health plans that serve your community, even though some may decline to participate. CHK staff can help notify the health plans and CHI about your project.

For more information about how to work with health insurance providers, please see “How to Work with Health Plans and CHIs” on the CHK website at [www.ca-ilg.org/chk](http://www.ca-ilg.org/chk) in the Resources and Tools section.

### 3. Publicize the event in advance.

If you are having an enrollment event, be sure to publicize it in advance. Consider using posters that can be displayed at community events, classes or meetings. You can hand out flyers to the kids to take home to their parents/caregivers or assign a staff person to distribute a flyer to the parents/caregivers when they come to pick up their kids.

The key is to find a good way to alert the parents/caregivers that the enrollment event will be happening so they can plan to attend. The information provided to parents/caregivers includes guidelines on eligibility and what to bring to start the enrollment process. Sample flyers are available on the CHK website at [www.ca-ilg.org/chk](http://www.ca-ilg.org/chk) in the Resources and Tools section.

### 4. Who does the enrolling? When?

The health plans and the CHIs will provide staff who are able (and qualified) to help families through the enrollment process. While enrollment may be completed at the event itself *if* the families know in advance and bring the necessary documentation, in many cases, the actual enrollment will be conducted over a period of days. When planning the event, be sure the health plans and CHIs will have enough staff participating to handle potential enrollees.

### 5. Use CHK provided material.

Be sure to use CHK provided materials for your flyers and publicity. This material has been written to comply with state regulatory requirements. It is permissible to add your agency's logo, or the names of additional sponsors.

### 6. Please help us with evaluation.

To help CHK meet its obligation to the WellPoint Foundation, our grantor, and to assist other communities who undertake CHK projects in the future, we need your help in evaluating your

event. CHK asks each participating agency to complete a short evaluation form as part of their activity. This involves providing information about best practices, what works and what you would do differently next time, and basic information about the event, including the number of flyers distributed, how many families and/or children participated, types of publicity and how many health insurance providers came to the event. CHK will provide the evaluation tool in advance.

### 7. Don't forget your own full-time and part-time employees.

While your agency's full-time employees may receive health benefits, many part-time employees may not. And, your employees may have family or friends whose children might be eligible for no or low cost health insurance for their children. You may want to provide enrollment information to them or invite them (or their friends and family) to enrollment events.

*Note: CHK thanks the members of our advisory committee who provided assistance in preparing this document.*



## HOW TO WORK WITH SCHOOLS - *Tips for Cities and Counties*

### What is Communities for Healthy Kids (CHK)?

The goal of CHK is to increase the number of eligible children who are enrolled in no-cost and low-cost health insurance offered through Medi-Cal, the state's Healthy Families Program, or one of the Children's Health Initiatives (CHIs) offered in 25 counties. These are children from low-income families – generally considered the working poor – who are not eligible for, and do not want to go on, welfare. In 2005, between 500,000 and 600,000 California children were eligible but uninsured.

Communities for Healthy Kids collaborating partners are the Institute for Local Government, the League of California Cities, the California State Association of Counties, the California Association of Health Plans, the California Teachers Association, Teachers for Healthy Kids, and the Cities-Counties-Schools Partnership. CHK is funded by a grant from the WellPoint Foundation.

### Why work with schools?

It's simple. Go where the kids are. Where there are kids, there are parents or guardians. Working with teachers and other school officials is one of the best ways for cities and counties to reach parents of children who may be eligible for no-cost or low-cost health insurance. Parents are accustomed to receiving information from schools and generally see them as trusted places to go for help. Schools are accustomed to providing information to parents and they have numerous outlets and opportunities to do so.

Teachers are invested in teaching to healthy students, and most know their students and their needs. They often know which students are ill most often and which ones may not have health insurance. Parents trust their children's teachers and are likely to respond to a form or flier sent home from the school.

### Different ways to work with schools

Depending upon your community, the interest at the school level and resources available, there are several different ways for cities and counties to work collaboratively with the education community to get the word out to parents about affordable health insurance so their children can be enrolled if they are eligible.

For example, it is possible to work with individual classroom teachers (using the Teachers for Healthy Kids model described on page 3) or to work with schools through other school-based programs, such as before and after school recreation programs held on school sites, or through pre-school or summer programs. Similarly, it is possible for cities and counties to collaborate with individual schools or with a district as a whole to incorporate the delivery of information about children's health insurance information into a district's or a school's existing activities or to help create new events at which the information can be shared. And, it is possible to combine a school-based activity with a city or county based activity to get the word out and eligible children enrolled.

### What is Teachers for Healthy Kids (THK)?

Teachers for Healthy Kids (THK) is a project developed jointly by the California Teachers Association (CTA) and the California Association of Health Plans (CAHP), funded by The California Endowment. The project's purpose is to include teachers as part of a comprehensive school outreach team that will make health insurance outreach part of regular school/parent communication. Project health plan partners support outreach efforts through strategic planning, participation in school activities and follow-up with enrollment as needed. The intent of THK is to ensure that all children have access to high-quality and accessible health care so they come to school ready to learn.

[www.TeachersForHealthyKids.com](http://www.TeachersForHealthyKids.com)

# HOW TO WORK WITH SCHOOLS - *Key Steps to Follow*



## 1. Decide how you want to work with the school.

Does your city or county want to collaborate by working through the school's before or after school recreation programs, or by working directly with classroom teachers? If you want to consider involving classroom teachers, then follow the THK model (described in #5 below). This involves working with both the local teachers association and the school district administration.

## 2. Contact individual schools in communities where high need is likely.

In large school districts or in a community where city and county officials have existing school relationships and contacts, you may be able to contact the school directly. CHK staff can help connect you with Teachers for Healthy Kids staff who can tell you if there is an existing project in the district or school site. If there is no THK program and no interest from the teachers, begin with the principal. He or she is responsible for everything that occurs at a school site and will know who best to work with you on the effort. The principal might direct you to work with the school nurse, if there is one on the campus. If you want to work with the classroom teachers to publicize a city or county enrollment event through the schools, be sure to contact THK, which will contact both the school administration and the local teachers association.

## 3. School events for outreach or enrollment.

Individual schools have many events and opportunities to connect with parents and get the word out about affordable health insurance for their kids. These events can be used as venues for signing children up for insurance or for alerting parents about enrollment events held at other locations, such as city community centers or county parks. Your conversations with the school administration and teachers can help decide which events may (or may not) be appropriate. Some possible opportunities are:

- Kindergarten enrollment (this happens in late winter or spring)
- Parent back-to-school nights
- Parent-teacher organization meetings and events
- School festivals and fairs
- Community centers

## 4. Some things to keep in mind.

In planning your approach, here are some things to keep in mind about working with schools:

- The primary mission of schools is education. Signing up families and children for health insurance, while important, is not part of their primary mission. Therefore, keep the impact of your activity on school personnel to a minimum as you decide what type of activity to pursue.
- The beginning and end of a school day are very busy. It is best to make appointments with administrators for times when children are in class. Also, the first few weeks of a school year or the last few weeks are similarly busy and should be avoided.
- Fliers and communication to parents may need to be translated into other languages. CHK has templates for brochures and fliers that can be used, and can have one translated if it is not available in a specific language. THK also has brochures and fliers that can be used. Check with the school about the major languages spoken in the homes of their students. You may also want to have translators at any event you are conducting.
- If the school site offers to help host an event, make sure that details such as signage, seating, parking, materials, restroom availability, clean-up and security are agreed upon prior to the event. You may need to work with the school on providing food for the families or child care.
- Involve the teachers and the school administration in planning your project. Keep an open mind and be flexible — teachers and school administrators may not think a certain activity or event will work well in their school or community. Ask for suggestions and be prepared to find alternatives that are acceptable to everyone involved.
- Work with CHK and THK staff to plan a meeting that includes the teachers association president, the district or school administration, school board members, and anyone else interested in working on the project. It is important to involve the local health plans and/or CHIs early in the planning process, so they should be included in your planning committees. Develop a timeline, assign tasks to different participants and get everyone's input on the project steps — some districts may want to do it in different ways to best fit their needs and expectations.

- Become aware of the Medi-Cal Administrative Activities (MAA) program which covers outreach activities in schools with a 50 percent reimbursement of costs. (See #11 on page 4 for a description of MAA.)

## 5. Working with Teachers for Healthy Kids.

Teachers for Healthy Kids (THK) is a collaborating partner with Communities for Healthy Kids. CHK and THK staff are available to help make the necessary connections with teachers in your community.

Key steps to working with Teachers for Healthy Kids are as follows:

- Find out if your district is already involved with a THK project. A list of Districts is available on the THK website, [www.TeachersForHealthyKids.com](http://www.TeachersForHealthyKids.com). CHK staff can also help gather this information from THK too. Remember, even if a district is included, not all school sites may have been involved in the THK activity.
- Ask THK to find out if the local teachers association wants to collaborate with your city or county to outreach and enroll kids in affordable health insurance. CHK will help with that connection. Some teachers associations may not be able to collaborate due to a variety of factors; if this is the case in your community, consider a project that does not involve classroom teachers, but utilizes some of the other outreach methods available in schools.
- Be sure to get agreement for a collaborative project from the school principal and/or district superintendent. Since most city and county officials have working relationships with the school district, this contact is best accomplished by them initially.
- Familiarize yourselves with the THK model. THK assists in the program development in the following ways:
  - Meets with the teachers at a regularly scheduled staff meeting to give them information about the availability of low-cost or no-cost health insurance.
  - Provides a health insurance survey to teachers to distribute and collect from students in targeted schools.
  - Uses the survey results to invite interested families to an enrollment event at a school. (This is an area where other groups might partner in outreach or enrollment activities which might be held at a city or county park or community center.)

- Provides the survey results to local health insurance plans, Children's Health Initiatives (CHIs) or other local Certified Application Assistants (CAAs) so they can follow up with interested families and provide more information and enrollment assistance.
- Holds a parents night for families who are enrolled to help them learn how to use the health insurance plan and to inform them of benefits. This is another area where community partners could be involved.

## 6. Involve the health insurance providers in your area.

Be sure to involve the health insurance providers in your area in planning and executing your activity. It is helpful to include them as you pick a date (or dates) for the outreach event. It is important to communicate early with the health insurance providers so that your potential date does not conflict with another event at which they are committed to participate.

If you are in one of the twenty-five counties that have a Children's Health Initiative (CHI), be sure to include them in the project. CHIs offer affordable health insurance to children who do not qualify for Medi-Cal or Healthy Families Program. A list of CHIs and contact information is available on the CHK website at [www.ca-ilg.org/chk](http://www.ca-ilg.org/chk) in the Resources and Tools section.

Remember, state regulations require you to invite all the health, dental and vision plans that serve your community, even though some may decline to participate. CHK staff can help notify the plans and CHIs about your project.

For more information about how to work with health insurance providers, please see "How to Work with Health Plans and CHIs" on the CHK website at [www.ca-ilg.org/chk](http://www.ca-ilg.org/chk) in the Resources and Tools section.





## 7. Publicize the event in advance.

If your project involves an enrollment event, be sure to publicize it in advance. Consider using posters that can be displayed at games, classes, faith-based centers or meetings prior to the event. You can hand out fliers to the kids to take home to their parents or ask a staff person to stand in the parking lot and distribute a flier to the parents when they come to pick up their kids. (Be sure to have the school's permission to do this.) Schools usually have some form of newsletter that goes home to parents and usually will allow you to include information about your event. The key is to find a good way to alert the parents that the enrollment event will be happening so they can plan to attend. The information provided to parents includes guidelines on eligibility and what to bring to start the enrollment process. Sample fliers and brochures are available on the CHK website at [www.ca-ilq.org/chk](http://www.ca-ilq.org/chk) in the Resources and Tools section.

## 8. Who does the enrolling? When?

The health plans and the CHIs will provide staff who are Certified Application Assistants and are qualified to help families through the enrollment process. Enrollment may be able to be completed at the event itself, *if* the families know in advance and bring the necessary documentation. When planning the event, be sure the health plans and CHIs will have adequate staff participating to handle potential enrollees. Also be sure you have made arrangements with the school about how the ongoing enrollment will occur. Encourage the CAAs to enroll families using the fast Internet application. Again, be sure to keep the impact on school staff to a minimum.

## 9. Use CHK-provided material.

Be sure to use the materials for your fliers and publicity that has been provided by CHK or THK if you are working in schools. This material has been specifically written to comply with state agency regulatory requirements. It is permissible to add your city or county logo, or the names of additional sponsors.

## 10. Please help us with evaluation.

To help CHK meet its obligation to the WellPoint Foundation, our grantor, and to assist other communities who undertake CHK projects in the future, we need your help in evaluating your event. CHK requests that each city or county participating in CHK complete a short evaluation form as part of the activity.

This includes providing information about best practices, what works and what you would do differently next time, and basic information about the event, including the number of fliers distributed, how many families and/or children participated, types of publicity, and how many health insurance providers came to the event. CHK will provide the evaluation tool in advance. The health plans and/or CHIs can help report enrollment results, to the extent that this information is available.

## 11. What is MAA - Medi-Cal Administrative Activities?

Medi-Cal Administrative Activities (MAA) reimburses schools, county agencies, and community-based organizations for fifty percent of costs associated with the time staff spend giving out information about Medi-Cal/Healthy Families and their covered benefits, and for time spent assisting people to apply for these programs. MAA is a set of activities approved by the federal Medicaid agency (the Center for Medicaid and Medicare Services — CMS) that assists the State Medi-Cal program to carry out its “administrative functions” more efficiently.

Many school districts across the state are already participating in MAA. If so, they will have an agreement with a Local Education Consortium (LEC) or Local Governmental Agency (LGA) that submits claims for reimbursement on their behalf and provides oversight of the claims process. Once a district has an agreement to participate in MAA, a coordinator identifies district employees who are likely to perform MAA activities.

In a typical MAA program, school staff who are responsible for responding to students' health-related needs become the core group of MAA participants. School nurses, health aides, speech therapists and psychologists almost always participate. In some districts, school principals, assistant principals, counselors, and support staff may also participate if the school site is engaged in outreach efforts such as informing parents of the availability of no or low cost health, dental or vision coverage, or has a disproportionate number of children whose circumstances increase their risk of poor health outcomes. Teachers may or may not participate in MAA, depending on the approach taken by a district.

*Note: CHK would like to thank representatives from Teachers for Healthy Kids, the Cities-Counties-Schools Partnership and the members of the CHK Advisory Committee for their assistance in the preparation of this document.*