

how to tips

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

Introduction

The success of your project 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 29 counties with 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. Income guidelines for Medi-Cal is based on the federal poverty level and changes relative to family size.

- **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. Income guidelines for The Healthy Families Program is based on the federal poverty level and changes relative to family size. The State and Federal government provide funding for the HFP.

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

29 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.

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

29 counties have Children's Health Initiatives actively engaged in outreach and enrollment of eligible children. Visit <http://www.cchi4kids.org/localchis.php> to see if a CHI 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.

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- **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 participate if a scheduling conflict exists. To avoid potential conflicts, consult early in the process with the health plans when selecting a date for an event or outreach meeting. Be respectful of the resource capabilities and limitations of these organizations.

- **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). It's also helpful to provide 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 them 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 expedite 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 fill 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, visit http://www.healthyfamilies.ca.gov/Joining/Apply_to_HFP.aspx#caa. 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.

- **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.