

# Medicaid Matters

## E-prescribing capability added to QTool electronic health record

A new e-prescribing capability that allows physicians to electronically send an accurate and understandable prescription directly to a pharmacy has been added to *QTool*, the Alabama Medicaid Agency's free web-based health record and clinical support tool.

Added in March, the new capability allows physicians to consult a patient's medical and claims history, check the Agency's Preferred Drug List and enter the prescription online from the *QTool* interface. The *QTool* is currently undergoing pilot testing in nine Alabama counties: Calhoun, Houston, Lamar, Jefferson, Montgomery, Pickens, Talladega, Tuscaloosa and Winston.

At Montgomery Pediatric Associates, e-prescribing has been welcomed as a convenient tool that maximizes professionals' time and decreases the potential for medication errors, according to John H. Summers, M.D. In his practice, physicians write prescriptions into the patient's chart, then nurses enter them into the e-prescribing system and transmit them directly to the pharmacy. [Read more >>](#)



*Montgomery pediatrician John H. Summers and nurse Linda Duffee prepare to transmit a prescription using QTool's new e-prescribing function.*

## Alabama "perfectly positioned" to obtain stimulus funds for HIT

Medicaid Commissioner Carol Steckel says the Agency's foresight in embracing technology to deliver better health care more economically will be a tremendous asset as lead in Alabama for health information technology (HIT) activities associated with the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009, better known as the federal stimulus program.



Steckel told members of the *Together for Quality* Stakeholder Council April 8 that Alabama is in an excellent position to pursue grant funding for HIT development in the state. "We started ahead of the curve with TFQ in 2007 and today Alabama is being talked about as a national leader in technology because of you," Steckel said. "We are perfectly positioned to get stimulus funds."

Steckel said the Agency will spearhead collaborative efforts related to HIT grants, coordinate federal grant requests and work closely with the state's coordinator for all federal stimulus activities to track and manage HIT funds that will be available to the state. The ARRA is expected to provide substantial funding—over \$20 billion—for the development and adoption of HIT. The largest allocation—approximately \$17 billion—is for incentive payments through the Medicare and Medicaid systems to encourage providers and hospitals to implement EHR technology systems. [Read more >>](#)



- ◆ **Medicaid Patient 1<sup>st</sup> program granted two-year renewal**
- ◆ **Appropriate use of anti-psychotic drugs is Agency initiative goal**
- ◆ **Medicaid's Scale Back Alabama 2009 winners are biggest losers**

## Two-year CMS renewal granted Alabama Medicaid Patient 1<sup>st</sup> program

The recent two-year renewal of the Alabama Medicaid Patient 1<sup>st</sup> program by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid (CMS) is good news for the more than 414,000 enrollees enjoying the benefits of having their own personal doctor close to home.



Patient 1<sup>st</sup> is a primary care case management (PCCM) program linking eligible Medicaid recipients with a primary medical provider (PMP) who provides services directly or through referral to another provider. There are currently 333,754 children and 80,468 adults in Patient 1<sup>st</sup>.

“The primary goal of the Patient 1<sup>st</sup> program is providing Medicaid recipients a medical home that improves health care outcomes while containing the costs of quality health care,” says Kim Davis-Allen, Transformation Initiatives Director.

The latest Patient 1<sup>st</sup> renewal by CMS is for the period April 1, 2009, through March 31, 2011.

## Safe, appropriate use of anti-psychotic drugs is Agency initiative goal

A new educational initiative by Alabama Medicaid Agency to encourage safe and appropriate use of anti-psychotic medication in children will start May 2009. The effort is an outgrowth of a multi-agency collaborative effort to improve the quality of care for Medicaid recipients, particularly children, by supporting FDA-approved indications and evidence-based, age-appropriate utilization of antipsychotic drugs.

The project was developed after Medicaid claims data identified more than 400 children aged 0-4 years who had received a “second generation” (also known as atypical) antipsychotic medication during calendar year 2007. Approximately half of these children did not have an FDA-approved diagnosis, while the other half had what would have been an FDA-approved diagnosis had they been older. Prescribers for this patient group included psychiatrists, family practice, neurologists, pediatricians and various other specialties. A number of these children were on multiple antipsychotic medications. [Read more >>](#)

## Medicaid’s Scale Back Alabama 2009 winners are biggest losers

Alabama Medicaid lost the equivalent of several people in the 2009 Scale Back Alabama weight-loss competition when 67 staffers dropped a total of 497 pounds during the statewide initiative designed to promote wellness as well as weight loss.

The highest individual weight loss race ended in a tie between Hazel Ashley and Robert Moon, M.D., who lost 20 pounds each. The “Healthy Spring Chicks,” Tamika Young, Teresa Pringle, Annie Waddles-Whitlow and Sara Isaac took home the group prize with a combined weight loss of 45 pounds. [Read more >>](#)



*Team winner “Healthy Spring Chicks,” left to right, Annie Waddles-Whitlow, Sara Isaac, Teresa Pringle and Tamika Young, followed by Robert Moon, M.D., and Hazel Ashley who tied as individual winners.*

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