

Medicaid Matters

Partnership Insurance program helps Alabama citizens protect assets

A new long-term care insurance program can help Alabama residents protect their assets if they ever have to apply for nursing home assistance from Medicaid. The Alabama Long-Term Care



Insurance Partnership Program, a collaboration between Alabama Medicaid and the Alabama Department of Insurance, allows Medicaid to disregard, or exclude, the benefits paid under an approved policy when determining an applicant's financial eligibility for long-term care.

First available on March 1, 2009, Partnership policies look like regular long-term care insurance policies except they must include inflation protection to keep up with the rising cost of long-term care services and meet IRS and other requirements. Only policies certified by the Alabama Department of Insurance qualify as Partnership policies.

The amount excluded by Medicaid is on a dollar-for-dollar basis. For example, if a Partnership policy pays a nursing home or other long-term care facility a total of \$54,000 on behalf of a resident, then that amount will be excluded from Medicaid's calculation of assets when that person applies for Medicaid coverage. The Partnership policy also protects these assets from any subsequent Medicaid liens and recoveries. All other Medicaid eligibility requirements still apply. [Read more >>](#)

Medicaid transformation showcased during legislative briefing

Alabama Medicaid's plan to transform its operations took center stage recently when Alabama legislators attended a demonstration of the Agency's *QTool* electronic health record. The *QTool*, the centerpiece of the Agency's Together for Quality (TFQ) transformation initiative, is a web-based clinical support tool that securely provides claims-based data on office visits, medications, lab tests, and other procedures for physicians.

The February 25 demonstration was co-hosted by Sen. Linda Coleman (D), 20th District, chair of the Senate Health Committee, and Rep. Mike Millican (D), 17th District, chair of the House Health Committee. [Read more >>](#)



Medicaid Commissioner Carol Steckel, center, welcomes Sen. Linda Coleman and Rep. Mike Millican to the TFQ technology briefing.

Agency designated as lead for HIT projects under stimulus package

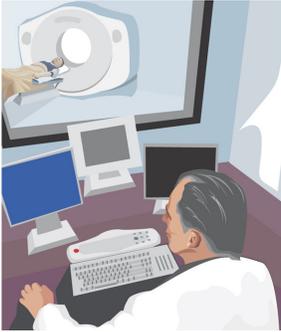
The Alabama Medicaid Agency has been designated by Governor Bob Riley to serve as the lead for all health information technology (HIT) activities related to the federal stimulus program, also known as the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act of 2009. The Agency will spearhead collaborative activities 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 funds made available to the state for health information technology. [Read more >>](#)



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Radiology Management moves Agency closer to quality care goals

With the inception of Alabama Medicaid's Radiology Management program in March, the Agency is moving closer to its goal of providing better care for recipients at a lower cost to taxpayers.



The new program, developed in partnership with state physicians, requires prior review and approval of expensive elective outpatient radiology procedures such as Magnetic Resonance Imaging, CT scans and PET scans for most Medicaid recipients who have full benefit coverage. Scans performed for hospital inpatients, emergency room patients and those covered by Medicare are excluded from the requirement.

By implementing the program, the Agency hopes to prevent unnecessary imaging exposure while ensuring that recipients receive the most clinically-appropriate advanced-imaging services.

“Through this new radiology management program, Medicaid will be able to provide access to quality health care, while closely managing costs,” said Medicaid Commissioner Carol Steckel, noting that the new program is estimated to save the Agency \$3 to \$5 million per year. [Read more >>](#)

State receives four-year \$1 million grant to enroll uninsured children

More Alabama children will get the health care they need, thanks to a new \$1 million grant to reduce the number of children who do not have health insurance. The four-year Robert Wood Johnson Foundation grant was awarded to the state to increase enrollment and retention of eligible children in Medicaid and ALL Kids, Alabama's Children's Health Insurance Program. Of the more than 25 states that made grant applications, Alabama was one of eight states selected to receive grant funding.



The Alabama Medicaid Agency has joined the Alabama Department of Public Health in implementing the PEAK (Perfecting Enrollment for Alabama's Kids) grant project which is being funded through the foundation's national *Maximizing Enrollment for Kids* program. The grant



Rep. Laura Hall met with Amy Rawlinson of Prattville and Ashanti Williams of Montgomery during their "shadow" visit to Capitol Hill with Alabama Medicaid Commissioner Carol Steckel.

period began on February 15. Alabama plans to use this new option to increase enrollment of eligible children by further developing and enhancing existing community systems and partnerships that assist families with enrollment and renewal processes.

“Alabama Medicaid welcomes this grant opportunity to further strengthen access to safety net programs for eligible children,” said Medicaid Commissioner Carol Steckel. “Medicaid and Public Health have a long history of partnering to maximize resources and streamline processes, and we look forward to this newest initiative.” [Read more >>](#)

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