

Medicaid Matters

Re-opening of QI-1 Program will help Medicare beneficiaries

Thousands of elderly and disabled Alabamians on Medicare will again have the opportunity to qualify for extra help in paying the cost of their monthly Medicare Part B premiums, the Alabama Medicaid Agency announced June 24.

The Agency is now accepting applications for the Qualifying Individual-1 (QI-1) program, according to Lee Rawlinson, Medicaid Deputy Commissioner for Beneficiary Services. The QI-1 program helps by paying the monthly Medicare Part B premium of \$110.50, and is available to Medicare Part A recipients whose income does not exceed \$1,239 per month for an individual, or \$1,660 for a couple and who are not otherwise eligible for Medicaid. Medicare Part B helps to cover medically-necessary services like doctors' services, outpatient care, home health services, and other medical services. Part B also covers some preventive services.



The re-opening of applications for the Qualifying Individual-1(QI-1) program comes two years after a shortage of federal funds caused Alabama Medicaid to stop taking new applications for the program. At that time, the state did not receive its full allotment of federal funds for the program and could not pay for new applicants to be added. The QI-1 program is 100 percent federally funded, but has an annual cap on the amount of money available which limits the number of people who can receive the benefit. Approximately 10,386 Alabama residents are currently on the program.

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Care Networks key to “medical neighborhood” concept for Medicaid

Established more than a decade ago, Alabama Medicaid’s Patient 1st program has helped thousands of Medicaid recipients establish a “medical home.” Now, a workgroup made up of physicians and other health professionals hope to improve care for Medicaid patients by creating care networks to support and extend the benefits of medical homes.



The workgroup, led by Alabama Medicaid Medical Director Robert Moon, M.D., includes physicians, hospitals, pharmacists and representatives from Medicaid, Public Health ALLKids, Mental Health, Children’s Rehabilitation Service, and Federally Qualified Health Centers. Together, they are working to craft new ideas that can be incorporated into the state’s Patient 1st program waiver renewal request due to the federal government later this year. The workgroup was formed after Alabama was chosen by the National Academy for State Health Policy in August 2009 to receive

technical assistance from national experts to expand and strengthen the use of medical homes in the state. [Read more >>](#)



- **Medicaid pilot program to enable LTC patients to receive home care**
- **Dr. Moon is Medicaid Medical Directors’ Learning Network vice chair**

Medicaid pilot program to enable LTC patients to receive home care

Spurred by a recommendation of the state's Long Term Care (LTC) Rebalancing Committee, the Alabama Medicaid Agency has approved a new pilot program that will create a comprehensive, but flexible system of care for aged and disabled adults in Mobile and Baldwin counties who would otherwise reside in a nursing home.

As approved, the Programs of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE) pilot program will provide participants with community services and support based upon their individual needs designed by an interdisciplinary team. The PACE project is different from home and community-based waiver programs in that the provider receives a set, or capitated payment and is in turn responsible for total patient care including doctor, hospital, and nursing home care along with medications, lab tests and other services.



Mercy Medical of Daphne will serve as the initial site for the project, tentatively scheduled to begin in fall 2011.

"This is one of many innovative long term care options we hope to offer to Medicaid recipients in the future," said Marilyn Chappelle, director of Medicaid's Long Term Care division.

According to the National PACE Association, there are 74 operational PACE programs serving more than 20,000 enrollees in 31 states. The typical PACE participant is very similar to the average nursing home resident. On average, the enrollee is 80 years old, has eight medical conditions and is limited in approximately three activities of daily living.

Forty-nine percent of PACE participants have been diagnosed with dementia. Despite a need for high level of care, more than 90 percent of PACE participants are able to continue to live in the community. [Read more >>](#)

Dr. Moon is Medicaid Medical Directors' Learning Network vice chair

Alabama Medicaid Medical Director Robert Moon, M.D., has been elected vice chair of the Medicaid Medical Directors' Learning Network. The group was launched in 2005 by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ), the health services research arm of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), to create an ongoing collaborative relationship between AHRQ and Medicaid Medical Directors or other officials making clinical decisions for the Medicaid population. Dr. Moon, who will step up to Learning Network chair in 2011, has served on the group's steering committee since 2009.



Through the Learning Network, AHRQ provides resources to members to help them make policy and practice decisions and encourages member input and feedback that may be instrumental in decisions made by AHRQ and HHS. In addition to AHRQ, a wide variety of other organizations and consortiums turn to the Learning Network for its expertise and perspective dealing with their individual projects and programs. [Read more >>](#)

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