

Medicaid Matters

Governor Robert Bentley: “We will protect our Medicaid Agency”

Even though proration of the state’s General Fund is inevitable, Governor Robert Bentley assured constituents in his first State of the State address that agencies – including Alabama Medicaid -- that provide critical services will be protected from cuts.



Governor Robert Bentley delivers his first State of the State address March 1. (Photo courtesy of Jamie Martin, photographer, Governor’s Office.)

“Under the 15 percent proration of the General Fund for the remainder of this year, there are agencies that simply must be protected,” he said during the March 1 presentation. “Agencies that provide critical services will be protected through supplemental appropriations and prioritization of budgets.”

“We will protect our Medicaid Agency,” he emphasized to the statewide audience. “Medicaid – which provides health care to approximately 1-million children, elderly and disabled people – must be protected.”

The governor observed that recurring shortfalls in both the Education and General Fund budgets also mean the state must do a better job of budgeting.

“Year after year, it has been a recurring theme in our state Government to adopt a budget that must be prorated. That must change. My goal is to never present a budget to you that must be prorated. That’s why the budgets I present will be balanced – they will be responsible and they will be conservative,” he said. [Read more >>](#)

Alabama plan for statewide health information network approved

The Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology (ONC) has approved Alabama’s strategic and operational plan to build a statewide health information network. Alabama Medicaid, the state agency responsible for the project, was notified February 25 of the federal government’s decision.

“Implementing an electronic health information system is essential to improve the quality, safety and efficiency of health care delivered in the state of Alabama,” said Medicaid Commissioner R. Bob Mullins, Jr., MD.



ONC’s approval makes it possible for Alabama to move ahead with its plan to develop a statewide health information network – now known as OneHealthRecord – to support the use of electronic health records, according to State Health Information Technology Coordinator Kim Davis-Allen.

She explained that the state was originally awarded the \$10.5 million federal grant through the HITECH Act in February 2010, and from that received an initial \$1 million planning grant in mid-2010. Federal approval releases the remaining funds to be used for the project. [Read more >>](#)



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Updated Web site offers greater access to Agency information

Medicaid recipients, providers and the general public now have greater access to a wide array of online resources and downloadable documents within an easy-to-navigate interface. The Agency's website - www.medicaid.alabama.gov -- was recently updated to provide site visitors with an expanded number of reference documents, manuals and publications.

New features include a Forms Library, a special Recipient section, and a "Newsroom" where newsletters, annual reports, statistics and other documents are available. The site also includes contact information for Medicaid and HP Enterprise Services, fee schedules, provider lists, an interactive Patient 1st doctor change form, prior authorization criteria, eligibility information, and the Agency's online catalog of free educational materials.

In addition, the new site has links to www.media.alabama.gov where users can sign up for RSS feeds or notices that are sent when news or ALERTS are issued by the Agency.

The website is maintained by the Agency's Communication Division. Questions or comments may be sent to the website's manager by email at webwork@medicaid.alabama.gov or by telephone at 334-353-4099.



Dr. Robert Moon addresses a capacity crowd at a mandatory Vendor Conference on January 16 in Montgomery.

Medicaid Patient Care Networks set to begin in mid-2011

Since the late 1990s, Alabama Medicaid's Patient 1st program has made it possible for thousands of Alabama Medicaid recipients to have a primary care physician close to home. Now, the Agency is poised to expand and strengthen this doctor-patient relationship by pilot testing care networks in three areas of the state starting in mid-2011.

Interest in the care network concept is growing, according to Robert Moon, MD, Medicaid Medical Director and Deputy Commissioner, Health Systems. He noted that more than 50 individuals representing organizations throughout the state attended a mandatory Vendor Conference on January 14 to learn more about the Agency's plans and to ask questions about the Request for Proposals that was released on December 1, 2010.

MedNet West of Tuscaloosa has been selected to pilot test a six-county network in west Alabama, pending approval of the new program by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. Proposals for a four-county area in east Alabama and two counties in north Alabama were received March 4 and are now being evaluated. [Read more >>](#)

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