

OUR COMMUNITY PARTNERS

RYAN WHITE CARE PROGRAM

HEALTHY START OF NORTH CENTRAL FLORIDA

CENTRAL HEALTHY START

RURAL HEALTH PARTNERSHIP OF NORTH CENTRAL FLORIDA



A Message

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Steven Oliva



WellFlorida is just settling into our new home as this issue comes out. After 36 years of renting facilities, we now have a place to call our own.

Many thanks to the talented and hardworking WellFlorida team for all the work they do and for helping to make this move a smooth transition.

We welcome readers to stop by and visit us at our new location. Our conference room will soon be available for meetings, training sessions and conferences. We encourage organizations to make use of our new facilities. For more information about using our conference room for your event, please call Doug Monroe at 313-6500 ext 127.

Please make a note of our new address and see the map on the back page of the newsletter for future reference.

Also, be sure to save this date: Wednesday, November 15, 2006. WellFlorida and our Community Partners will be hosting an Open House. All are invited to join us!

New Home for WellFlorida Council



WellFlorida Council recently moved to new facilities in the Fort Clarke Business Center in Gainesville. Located just minutes from exits on I-75, the building is easily accessible to friends and customers from outlying areas.

For over 36 years, WellFlorida has served residents, governments, businesses, school systems and a wide variety of community-based organizations throughout North Central Florida.

“WellFlorida Council’s efforts are evident throughout the region,” said Becky Dobbin, representing Sen. Rod

Smith at the USDA/WellFlorida building check presentation ceremony this summer.

During the past four years, WellFlorida's grantwriting efforts have brought more than \$3,000,000 in federal, state and private grants to the region to assist with healthcare for the uninsured and underinsured. In addition, along with its Community Partners, WellFlorida provides or coordinates millions of dollars of maternal and infant, HIV/AIDS and chronic disease services for thousands of residents in the 16 counties it serves.

Calendar

September 2006

CDC's 2006 National Health Promotion Conference—*Innovations in Health Promotion: New Avenues for Collaboration*

September 12–14

Atlanta, GA

For information visit:

www.cdc.gov/cochp/conference

October 2006

Rural Health Partnership of North Central Florida Annual Meeting

October 18 at 9:00 am

WellFlorida, Gainesville, FL

Public Policy Conference

The conference will address legislative and liability issues impacting nursing healthcare in Florida.

October 6

Orlando, FL

Contact: Willa Fuller

Phone: 407-896-3261

Building Bridges: Interdisciplinary Paths to Palliative and End-of-Life Care for People with Diverse Conditions (Cancer, Dementia, and Heart Disease)

October 27–28

Tampa, FL

Contact: Maria Uravich

Phone: 813-974-6682

Email: muravich@health.usf.edu

November 2006

Save the date for the WellFlorida Open House.

Wednesday, November 15

WellFlorida Council

1785 NW 80th Blvd.

Gainesville, FL

December 2006

Florida Rural Health Association's Annual Summit

Smart Growth in Rural Florida—Impacts on Our Health

December 7- 8

Lake Mary, FL

Online registration available!

Visit the Florida Rural Health Association's website at:

<http://www.flrha.org>

Visit our website:

www.wellflorida.org

Recent Policy Changes in Medicaid and SCHIP Coverage for Children: What Works and What Doesn't?

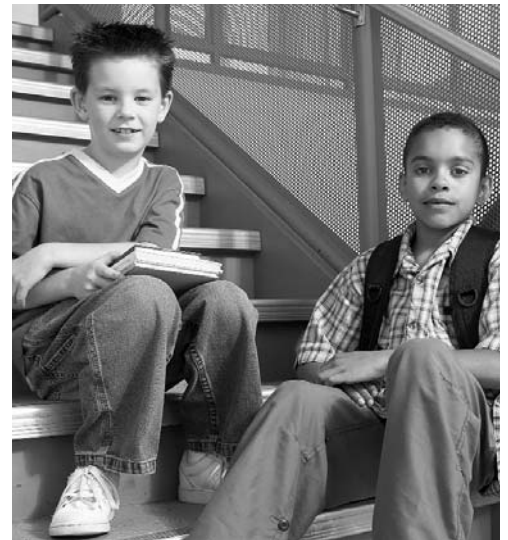
Public health insurance coverage for children is currently available through two federal programs: Medicaid and the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP). Recent policy changes at the federal and state levels have raised concerns about the future availability, affordability and scope of coverage for Florida's low-income children. Consideration of public health insurance for Florida's children is timely due to three important legislative actions: (1) the pending reauthorization of SCHIP in 2007; (2) the 1115 Florida Medicaid Reform waiver, which began implementation on July 1, 2006; and (3) the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 (hereafter, DRA), which was signed into law this year and authorizes states to implement various changes to Medicaid without applying for and obtaining waivers.

Deficit Reduction Act of 2005

The DRA affects Medicaid eligibility through new federal requirements for explicit documentation of citizenship for new applications and renewals. For children, this requirement would mean that parents would have to present legal documentation to the state agency handling Medicaid (versus self-declaring with subsequent verification by the state). This is expected to add complexity to the application/renewal process, increase costs to state agencies and delay coverage. The DRA also allows for greater family cost sharing which may, in turn, reduce utilization of necessary medical services and decrease program enrollment.

Florida Medicaid Reform

In Florida, the implementation of the new Medicaid pilot program authorized under the 1115 waiver



begins in 2006 in Broward and Duval counties, with subsequent expansions to other parts of the state. The pilot is a “defined contribution” program with risk-adjusted premiums. Beneficiaries (including children) can use the risk-adjusted premium amount to enroll in a Medicaid managed care plan contracted by the state; alternatively, they can “opt out” and use the premium toward the purchase of employer-sponsored or individual coverage that is not contracted by the state. Those who opt out are subject to the selected plan's benefit limits and cost sharing requirements. This is in contrast to Medicaid's traditional “defined benefit” plan in which there is a guaranteed set of benefits established by the state and within federal guidelines.

Under the pilot program, families face a more complicated choice for their children because they must weigh the benefits and cost sharing requirements among the state and private plan options. Because children only receive full coverage once the plan is selected and not when they are determined to be Medicaid-eligible, families' incentive

continued on next page

to make a decision quickly may impede their ability to make a well-informed decision based on their children's health needs. Children with special healthcare needs may face particular challenges under the defined contribution program because it is not clear how well the risk-adjusted premiums will reflect their individual health needs or how the changes in the financing and delivery of care will affect their access to needed health services. However, the pilot program seeks to promote greater utilization of recommended preventive services through its "Enhanced Benefits" program, which enables families to earn "credit dollars" for taking their children to dental exams, vision exams, and other wellness visits.

State Children's Health Insurance SCHIP also potentially faces major changes when it is due for reauthorization in 2007. Because it is a block grant, it has a fixed annual funding level. Severe shortfalls are anticipated if the annual funding remains frozen at its 2007 level with the reauthorization. States facing shortfalls in SCHIP funding have typically responded by reducing eligibility, eliminating benefits,

and/or increasing cost sharing in the form of increased copayments and/or premiums. For example, Florida's SCHIP program has undergone several policy changes in recent years: income documentation requirements for new applications and renewals have increased, funding for program outreach has vacillated, and family cost-sharing requirements have changed. The effect of such changes in Florida and other states on program enrollment and access to healthcare continue to be evaluated and debated. The implications of federal and state policy changes for the affordability, accessibility, and quality of health services for low-income children will be the focus of the upcoming conference, "Recent Policy Changes in Medicaid and SCHIP Coverage for Children," hosted by the University of Florida (see sidebar). At this meeting, nationally-recognized speakers will share their expertise and provide the context for conference participants to explore the issues.

Jill Boylston Herndon, Ph.D., Institute for Child Health Policy, University of Florida

Lynne Holt, Ph.D, The Askew Institute, University of Florida

Please join us on September 14-15 at the Hilton UF Conference Center in Gainesville for stimulating presentations and lively discussion as we explore the implications of recent policy changes in Medicaid and SCHIP for children and what works and what doesn't in Florida and other states.

This meeting is sponsored by the Askew Institute, the Institute for Child Health Policy, the Institute for Child and Adolescent Research and Evaluation, the University of Florida, and the Winter Park Health Foundation, with additional support from: the Office of Research and Graduate Programs, University of Florida; the John Scott Dailey Florida Institute of Government; and the WellFlorida Council, Inc. Due to generous support from the Winter Park Health Foundation, the registration fee is very low—\$100 which includes dinner, breakfast, lunch, refreshments and materials. You can register by mail (see registration form below) or online at: <http://web.clas.ufl.edu/askew/>. If you have questions, please e-mail Jennifer Snyder at jsnyder@aa.ufl.edu.

Recent Policy Changes in Medicaid and SCHIP Coverage for Children: What Works and What Doesn't?

Register now to participate in this conference on September 14 and 15 at the Hilton UF Conference Center in Gainesville

Name _____

Organization _____

Title _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip Code _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Name Spouse/Guest if attending: _____

Please specify any special needs (dietary, disability, etc.) _____

Registration Fee Information

Please select all that apply

\$100 Registration Fee (Must be received by Sept. 1, 2006)

\$150 Late Registration Fee (After Sept. 1, 2006)

Please indicate which meals you plan to attend:

Yes No Dinner, Thursday, September 14

Yes No Breakfast & Lunch, Friday, September 15

Guest Meals:

\$45 Dinner, Thursday, September 14

\$30 Breakfast & Lunch, Friday, September 15

Please Send Payment To:

The Askew Institute, PO Box 117320, Gainesville, FL 32611

Refunds are available if notice is received prior to Sept. 1, 2006. No refund requests will be processed after Sept. 1, 2006. Requests for refunds must be made in writing.

Hotel Reservations: You may make your reservations at the UF Hilton Hotel by calling (352) 371-3600. Hotel space is limited.

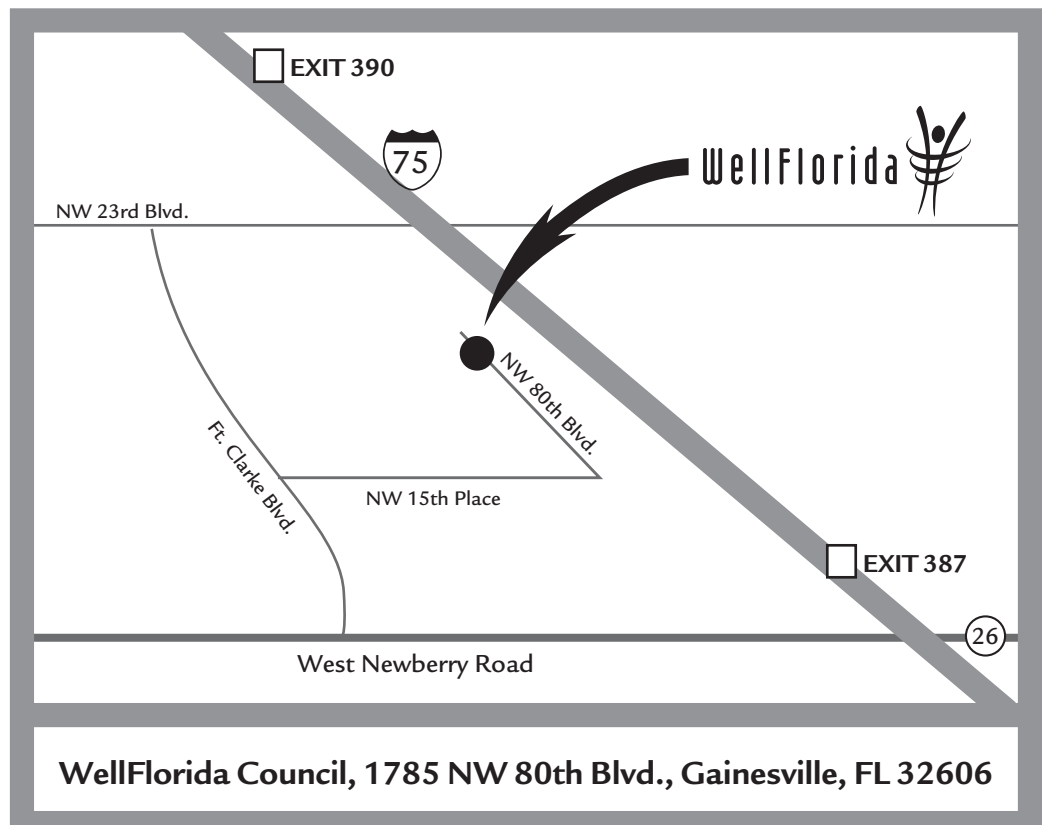
Map to WellFlorida

*Serve your community,
 be a member on WellFlorida's
 Board of Directors. We
 currently have openings for
 representatives from:*

*Citrus County
 Dixie County
 Levy County
 Sumter County
 Suwannee County*

*Please contact Doug Monroe
 at 352-313-6500 ext. 127 or
 dmonroe@wellflorida.org for
 more information.*

United Way of Suwannee Valley



WellFlorida Council, 1785 NW 80th Blvd., Gainesville, FL 32606