

# Medicaid Matters

## Groups prepare to file applications for RCO probationary status

Representatives of the organizations wishing to apply for status as a probationary Regional Care Organization in Alabama met with Agency officials and consultants in Montgomery on July 22 to review the application process and receive preliminary data. Twelve organizations have submitted a Notice of Intent to apply for Probationary Certification.

Dr. Don Williamson, chair of the Alabama Medicaid Transition Task Force, provided an update to the group on pending changes to the state's Administrative Code and on decisions made thus far. Most recently filed rules include provisions on network adequacy, provider standards committees and reimbursement rates.

Other key decisions have been made as well, he said, noting that a decentralized approach to claims payment and to data collection will be used although the Agency will need to determine how to access that data for its needs.

"We looked at centralizing claims payment and looked at the idea of centralizing data functions. After talking with the people interested in being Probationary Applicants, it was clear that they felt they needed both access to the data and to be able to process claims. Medicaid will need to figure out how to crosswalk that data because we will need access to common data sets so we can compare and contrast across RCOs." [Read more >>](#)



Medicaid Medical Director Dr. Robert Moon (second from left) talks with Danny Rickard, University of South Alabama, as Sylvia Brown, Executive Director, Gulf Coast Patient Care Network, and Medicaid Acting Commissioner Stephanie Azar (right) listen following the meeting for potential RCO probationary applicants.

## Stabilizing physician workforce is basis for "bump" extension

Medicaid-enrolled primary care physicians who qualify for enhanced payments known as the "bump" will continue to receive those payments through September 30, 2015, State Health Officer Dr. Don Williamson announced.



The "bump" refers to the Affordable Care Act requirement that state Medicaid programs to increase or "bump" up in payments to certain physicians for specified primary care services beginning January 1, 2013 through the end of 2014.

While the additional payments were originally triggered by the Affordable Care Act, the decision to extend the payments for an additional nine months was more about ensuring that the state had an adequate number of primary care physicians as it prepares to implement major Medicaid program reforms, Dr. Williamson said.

Physician participation in the Medicaid program is a concern, he said, because approximately 22 percent of enrolled primary care physicians now receive 90 percent of all claims payments. [Read more >>](#)



**Inside:**

- CMS recognizes Alabama eligibility and enrollment system
- County recipient, payment data for 2013 now on Agency website

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## CMS report recognizes Alabama eligibility and enrollment system

Alabama is one of five states recently recognized by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services for its progress in making technology updates to transition to a streamlined, data-driven eligibility determination process.

The new CARES (Centralized Alabama Recipient Eligibility System) system, implemented jointly by Alabama Medicaid and ALL Kids and developed by the Alabama Department of Public Health, was noted in a July 11, 2014 report for its early successes in implementing federally-required simplifications that significantly improve the application and enrollment process for individuals and families. Other states noted in the report include Colorado, Kentucky, New York and Utah.

The report specifically mentioned the state's new ability to make real-time eligibility determinations on almost all applications for MAGI (Modified Adjusted Gross Income)-based eligibility groups received through the state's online portal. This new capability also enables applicants to receive a Medicaid identification number upon approval. Once the eligibility is sent to Medicaid's claims processing system (Hewlett Packard), providers can use the system to look up individuals and confirm their enrollment. Currently the new system only processes Medicaid eligibility for children, parents, pregnant women, Plan First, former foster care children and children eligible for ALL Kids.

The progress that has been made is a tribute to the collective efforts made by ADPH and Medicaid, according to Gretel Felton, Deputy Commissioner for Beneficiary Services. She explained that the new system will ultimately replace the existing architecture and structure of the current Medicaid system which is over 30 years old and suffers from technology insufficiencies common to older, outdated systems. [Read more >>](#)

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## County recipient, payment data for 2013 now on Agency website

Did you know that Medicaid paid more than \$1 billion to health care providers in Jefferson County for services provided to Medicaid recipients in FY 2013? Or, that Medicaid covers 50 percent or more of all children in 29 of the state's 67 counties? These and other facts are part of the newly updated county data report now available on the Agency's website under Newsroom >Statistics.

The report features state and county-level data on Medicaid payments by provider and recipient as well as eligibility numbers for children and adults. [Click here to review the report](#)

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