

MHAC
Policy/Legislative Subcommittee Meeting
November 18, 2008
10:30 a.m. – 11:45 a.m. EST

MHAC Attendees: Lucie Ferguson, Michael Pyles, Claudia Tellez

MHAC Absent: Rudolph Wilson

OMHPHP Staff: Susan Triggs

Public Attendees: None

Meeting convened by: Claudia Tellez, who suggested that the meeting agenda include the following topics:

Legislative Advocacy Items

1. Subcommittee members decided to target Medicaid Reimbursements to Physicians as the group focus.
 - Doctors must basically be willing to do pro bono work in order to take care of these patients
 - Virginia Medicaid reimburses at a rate of 34% of what doctors charge for services
 - An increase would provide incentive for providers
 - Recommend collaboration between hospitals and the Medical Society of Virginia
 - The low pay amounts present a barrier to care for many patients, including children with special needs

Michael Pyles reminded group that Medicaid is very sensitive to economic downturns like the current state of the U.S. economy. Lucie Ferguson suggested that room be made on MHAC quarterly meeting agendas for speakers to come and present the group with information about this topic. Subcommittee members would like to start by inviting Jill Hankin, Virginia Poverty Law Center, to be the first speaker at the January MHAC meeting. Lucie Ferguson reports that Ms. Hankin had started the “Healthcare for All Virginians” group and has a diverse group of participants after just three meetings. Claudia Tellez asks Lucie to recommend her for this group.

2. Obesity was suggested as another area to target.
 - Lucie Ferguson suggested that money from the tobacco settlement could be used to support a policy agenda in this regard
 - The group queried about the status of the VDH C.H.A.M.P.I.O.N.S. initiative

- Further information on C.H.A.M.P.I.O.N.S. is located at <http://www.vahealth.org/WIC/Champion.asp>

3. Infant Mortality

- Prenatal Care for undocumented women
- Use in connection with OMHPHP data – available online

4. Action Steps

- Subcommittee will target the January session for policy recommendations
 - i. Get a synopsis of what VDH's vision is for recommendation and provide recommendations for this group
 - ii. Want to set strategies to take to the larger MHAC for approval
 - iii. Group will take cues from the Commissioner
- **Group agenda will be**
 - i. **Medicaid**
 1. **Would like to have a senior policy analyst**
 2. **Adopt a guiding principle such as “Medicaid’s Role for Virginia’s Safety Net”**
 - ii. **Prenatal Care for undocumented women**

5. **Selection of Chair**

- Group consensus was that Claudia Tellez would serve as Chair of this Subcommittee.
- Claudia Tellez accepted the position of Chair

6. Everyone agreed that the larger MHAC quarterly meetings must be more informative

- Group was referred to the “Health Equity Report” (previously “Minority Health Report”)
- Would like speakers at quarterly MHAC meetings to facilitate formulation of recommendations.
- Discussion around whether we are “trying to make poor sound prettier”
 - i. Sounds like wordsmithing
 - ii. Will discuss at December meeting

Next Meeting is scheduled for the week of January 5, 2009 (one week prior to the January 13, 2009 MHAC meeting)

Meeting was adjourned

Submitted 12-5-08 by: Susan L. Triggs, MPH, RN
Health Equity Specialist