



Covering Kids & Families Wisconsin

Issue XVII

September 2007

Healthy Kids = Successful Kids; BadgerCare Can Help!



The start of a new school year is a busy time for children and families. In addition to the usual school supplies and paperwork, it's important for parents to have health insurance for their families on their back-to-school list.

An estimated 110,000 children in Wisconsin were without insurance for at least part of the year in 2005, with half of them likely eligible for BadgerCare.

CKF's fifth annual Back to School Campaign is in full swing and we need your help to reach even more families. Outreach materials about BadgerCare are available at no cost to organizations. Visit www.ckfwi.org/outreach.cfm.

\$ Heads Up \$

CKF is planning on offering funds to foster the development and enhance the work of local coalitions aimed at improving access to Medicaid and/or BadgerCare for children and families. This year we hope to offer these funds in partnership with ABC for Health's HealthWatch Wisconsin effort and BadgerCare Plus mini-grants to be offered by the Department of Health and Family Services. Look for more details this fall at www.ckfwi.org.

Health Policy Update: SCHIP (State Children's Health Insurance Program)

In August 2007, the US House and Senate passed varying bills that would greatly increase financing for SCHIP. This is coming at a time when new Census Bureau data shows that the number of uninsured children has increased for the second consecutive year and has hit a new high.

The following summaries, adapted from a memo to Ambulatory Pediatric Association members, explain what has happened thus far and the steps our state is taking in preparation for the enhanced program.

- On August 1, 2007, the House voted to pass the Children's Health and Medicare Protection Act of 2007 (CHAMP Act). Legislation includes \$50 billion for Medicaid and SCHIP over the next five years to reach more than five million new children and to be partially paid for by a 45 cent increase in federal tobacco tax.

- On August 2, 2007, the Senate voted to pass the Children's Health Insurance Program Act (CHIP Act), devoting \$35 billion to the Medicaid and SCHIP programs over the next five years to reach eligible children. This would be paid for by a 61 cent increase in federal tobacco tax.

Both bills also include specific provisions to fund outreach and enrollment by states as well as significant provisions to improve the quality of pediatric services. The CHAMP Act and the CHIP Act must be conferenced, and that conference agreement must be approved by both houses before being signed by President Bush. The White House has threatened

to veto the bills in their current form saying both are a step toward nationalized health coverage.

- On August 17, 2007, the Bush administration also published new standards making it more difficult for states to extend coverage to children in middle-income families. According to the White House, the standards were established in an attempt to focus the Children's Health Insurance Program on its original purpose, to cover low-income children and prevent the program from becoming a substitute for private health insurance.

Here in Wisconsin we're keeping BadgerCare Plus on our radar—Governor Doyle's policy solution. If passed by the WI legislature, BadgerCare Plus will merge Family Medicaid, BadgerCare and Healthy Start to expand access to comprehensive, affordable health care to more children, working families and pregnant women in Wisconsin.

In preparation for Governor Doyle's initiative, the WI Department of Health and Family Services is planning to work with a wide range of non-profit organizations teaching them how to help children and families enroll using the web-based ACCESS tool (<https://access.wisconsin.gov/>). The Department also plans to train community agencies such as HeadStart programs, schools, WIC agencies, Boys & Girls Clubs and faith-based organizations to provide temporary enrollment for children.

Information about BadgerCare Plus is available online at <http://dhfs.wisconsin.gov/badgercareplus>.

(Re)Introducing the CKF Staff

My, how we've grown! In recent months, CKF has added staff to accomplish the goals laid out in our two latest grants while still continuing to do the important work of the coalition. So, allow us to introduce and reintroduce ourselves ...

CKF project director, **Roberta Riportella**, is an Associate Professor in the School of Human Ecology's Department of Consumer Science and a Health Policy Specialist for UW Cooperative Extension. Roberta is one of the few UW faculty members whose job description includes the very type of community linkages required to oversee a coalition like CKF. Her main focus has been on understanding and helping at-risk families overcome barriers in accessing health care. Further, she works with many community groups through her connection with county-based Extension faculty and through her own work with other statewide coalitions, including her leadership role with the Wisconsin Primary Health Care Consortium. More directly related to the academic/theoretical/research needs of the coalition, Roberta has designed and evaluated interventions aimed at increasing participation in the federal health screening program (one of the many benefits of public health insurance), and published about the theory behind the development of interventions and the evaluation of projects. Finally, Roberta teaches about the specifics of Wisconsin's Family Medicaid programs through her course as a member of the University of Wisconsin-Madison faculty, in many guest lectures, in professional development settings, and through various outreach modalities.

Michael Jacob has served as the project coordinator for CKF since its inception in March of 2003. He has a degree in Busi-



ness Management from UW-Madison and a Masters in Public Policy Administration and Analysis from the UW-Madison LaFollette Institute. Prior to joining CKF, Michael led the media and public outreach efforts of a research center at UW-Madison and also served as press secretary for US Senator Russ Feingold (D-WI). Michael's long history of outreach and research related to public policy has served CKF well as it harnesses the energy and talent of more than 65 organizations to reach people across Wisconsin, to understand the people behind the data to target its outreach, and to affect public policy and administration related to the delivery of health care for the working poor.



Allison Espeseth has been working with CKF since the fall of 2004. Her work has included preparing information-based outreach campaigns, policy primers and trainings about Family Medicaid programs. She has also led data gathering and research necessary for following Family Medicaid policy developments and understanding the level of health coverage needed in Wisconsin. Allison now has the lead role in CKF's CHILD project in Marathon County and serves as the point person at CKF to help our partners understand the option of building on the National School Lunch Program enrollment process to reach Family Medicaid-eligible families. Allison received her Bachelor's degree in Sociology from Oberlin College and her Master's degree in Consumer Behavior from UW-Madison. She brings a deep understanding of what motivates



(Continued on back)

Co-chair corner: CKF Turns Focus to CHILD Project

By: Andy Heidt & Kathy Kaelin, CKF co-chairs



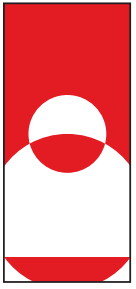
This summer saw a major transition for CKF, as we moved from four and a half years of fairly broad outreach funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation into much more targeted outreach funded by Wisconsin's two medical colleges. What remains the same is our commitment to maintaining a strong coalition that improves access to Family Medicaid programs for low and moderate income families.

You'll be hearing a lot about our Connecting Health Insurance to Lunch Data (CHILD) project over the next three years, starting on the next page. Meantime, the work of the coalition continues which means Back to School outreach, maintaining a presence on the policy and administrative fronts, gearing up for BadgerCare Plus (assuming the legislature passes a budget and expands Wisconsin's successful public health insurance program proposed by Governor Doyle) and gathering our members to share strategies and questions related to reducing the number of uninsured children and families in Wisconsin. Our commitment to making sure that all children and families have coverage and access to health care is essential to our mission.

Also, look for a major update to our web site, www.ckfwi.org. Let Jeni Bingen know any suggestions you might have by e-mailing jlbingen@wisc.edu. We've already added information, including weekly updates about the CHILD project on our "CHILD" page. We'll also use the web site to put out a call for proposals from local coalitions to expand the reach of our CHILD project, to disseminate our county-specific Family Medicaid brochures and a host of other information.



CHILD Project at Work in Marathon, Milwaukee, La Crosse and Polk Counties



With funds from the UW School of Medicine & Public Health Wisconsin Partnership Fund and the Medical College of Wisconsin's Healthier Wisconsin Partnership Program, CKF has turned its focus to its Connecting Health Insurance to Lunch Data (CHILD) project.

Now active in Marathon, Milwaukee, La Crosse and Polk counties, the CHILD project covers 10 school districts, from the state's most urban district, Milwaukee Public Schools, to more rural districts like Abbotsford in Marathon County and Clayton in Polk County and also suburban districts including Holmen and Onalaska in La Crosse County. The project has the potential to reach more than 100,000 students in just this first year alone.

The initial sites were selected for their mix of high- and low-income populations, urban and rural areas and racial and ethnic populations. Experiences drawn from these diverse populations and locales will lay the groundwork for devising processes that can ultimately be implemented statewide.

The project has been well-received by school districts, who see value in helping their students succeed through increased access to health care. Milwaukee Public Schools Superintendent William Andrekopolus, has praised efforts to better connect health insurance and school lunch data in hopes of enrolling more eligible MPS families in Family Medicaid programs. "When we come together, that's an opportunity to move forward in a positive way," Andrekopolus said.

CKF is working with school district staff and project partners to use a variety of outreach strategies aimed at increasing awareness of and promoting application to Family Medicaid programs to free/reduced priced lunch recipients. Strategies include:

- General promotion of Family Medicaid programs. Materials include: flyers to all students, local newspaper or school newsletter articles and information on district web sites.
- Targeted information about Medicaid specifically to students enrolled in free/reduced price lunch programs. Materials may include a flyer, bookmark or phone call to families receiving free/reduced price lunch.

CHILD work so far has also resulted in making improvements to existing forms related to the free/reduced price lunch process and encouraging more schools and districts to collect health insurance status. For some school districts already asking about health insurance status, these strategies may be further targeted, allowing for more intensive outreach efforts to those families without health insurance.

The project is also benefiting from its work with CKF coalition members already working in the chosen communities. Community Advocates, a CKF coalition member and now subcontract agency with the CHILD project, is implementing CHILD in Milwaukee. CKF partners in La Crosse and Polk counties, the La Crosse County Public Health Department and ABC for Rural Health, respectively, are playing key roles in implementing CHILD.

CKF has already begun looking ahead to years two and three of the project, with an eye toward expanding into new counties or districts. CKF coalition members interested in helping build this project and bring it to their community are encouraged to contact the office at info@ckfwi.org or (608) 261-1455.

To evaluate the success of various outreach strategies within the CHILD project, CKF is working with the Institute for Research on Poverty at UW-Madison and the Department of Health and Family Services. By matching school district student enrollment files and free/reduced price lunch enrollment files with the Department of Health and Family Services' application and enrollment records, CKF will be able to determine how many students received CHILD materials and subsequently applied and/or enrolled in Family Medicaid programs. Keep current with the project by reading our weekly status reports at <http://ckfwi.org/projects.cfm>.

You've made sure your child has a hot lunch...

Do they have health insurance?

Because your child qualifies for Free/Reduced Price Lunch they may also qualify for free/low-cost health insurance!

Health insurance is available!
BadgerCare and Medical Assistance are free or low-cost health insurance programs available to uninsured children & families with incomes like yours.

Benefits include:

- ✓ Doctor visits
- ✓ Hospital stays and surgery
- ✓ Prenatal care
- ✓ Health Check and check-ups
- ✓ Immunization shots (vaccines)
- ✓ Eyeglasses
- ✓ Hearing aids
- ✓ Prescription drugs
- ✓ Dental care
- ✓ Family planning
- ✓ Speech therapy
- ✓ Physical/Occupational therapy
- ✓ Mental health services
- ✓ Lab and x-rays
- ✓ Alcohol/drug addiction care
- ✓ Transportation assistance to care
- ✓ Emergency room care

This information is provided by the Covering Kids & Families-Wisconsin (CKF) CHILD project, working with Wisconsin's schools to make sure more families like yours can access health coverage. Visit us at www.ckfwi.org

You/your child likely qualify if:

- ✓ Your child is eligible for free/reduced price lunch,
- AND
- ✓ You or your child do not have health insurance (or your employer pays less than 80% of the premium)

The most important thing is to apply for these programs even if you are not sure you qualify.

To apply or find out more:

Three options:

- ✓ Go on-line: www.access.wi.gov
- ✓ Call: (715) 261-7500 or (715) 261-7700
- ✓ Visit: Marathon Co. Social Services
400 E. Thomas St., Wausau
The Job Center
364 Grand Avenue, Wausau

Information you will need when you apply:

For each person applying for health insurance you will need to provide or prove the following:

- ✓ Social Security Number
- ✓ Date of birth
- ✓ Marital status
- ✓ Citizenship
- ✓ Identity
- ✓ Employer's name and address
- ✓ Income
- ✓ If you already have health insurance coverage: name of insurance company, policy number, and who is covered under the policy



Rev. 07/2007

**Covering Kids & Families
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consumption of and participation in health-producing activities, particularly the role of external forces such as policy and expert information.

Karen Odegaard joined CKF in May 2007 as an outreach assistant and now leads the CHILD project in La Crosse and Polk Counties. Her experience includes nearly two years with the City of Green Bay's Neighborhood Division where she focused her energies on the city's use of federal Community Development Block Grant program and grassroots neighborhood organizations. Prior to her work with the city,

Karen served as a reporter for the Green Bay Press-Gazette, covering local government. She has her Bachelor's degree in Print Journalism from UW-Eau Claire. She brings her experience working with diverse groups of people in a community outreach capacity.

Ludys Rivera joined Community Advocates (CA) of Milwaukee in October 2005. In May 2007 she was promoted to Manager of Medicaid Services with CA and began working in partnership with CKF to lead the CHILD project in Milwaukee County. Ludys has a wealth of knowledge in the field having worked as a Family Outreach Worker with the Head Start Program/Early Childhood Program during her 15 years with Milwaukee Public Schools. She brings to the coalition her experience in case management, coordinating educational and life-skills activities and networking with community agencies. She has also focused her energies on assisting patients through the Medicaid process and connecting them to community resources while working at St. Francis Hospital in Milwaukee. Ludys is currently pursuing a degree in Community Leadership.



Jeni Bingen began in August 2007 to assist with the CHILD project in Marathon County and to coordinate our core outreach efforts, including updating our web site, producing the newsletter, coordinating the Back to School campaign and building the coalition. Her work includes two years with the Boys & Girls Club of Dane County—Allied Family Center coordinating



adult and family programming. During this time she focused on identifying and addressing community needs by collaborating with local resources. Jeni received her Bachelor's degree in Human Development & Family Studies and an additional major in Spanish from UW-Madison. She brings her knowledge in establishing and maintaining partnerships within a community based environment.

Debra Ryan joined CKF this summer to manage our many grants and subcontracts with local organizations. Debra has more than ten years accounting and grants management in addition to five years of case management work experience in nonprofit organizations and in educational environments. She'll start a new job as Executive Director for Quaker Housing in September. We wish her well with this wonderful new endeavour.



Save the Date!

What: State Coalition Meeting

When: Wednesday, October 24, 2007

Where: The Wilderness Resort, Wisconsin Dells

Who: CKF Coalition Members

For more information visit www.ckfwi.org.