



CHIP Reauthorization: Summary of Children's Oral Health Provisions

The Children's Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act (H.R. 2) that was passed by Congress and signed into law on February 4, 2009 includes key provisions that will improve children's oral health needs and access to services, including:

- **Dental coverage guarantee.** CHIP requires that states provide dental coverage for CHIP beneficiaries.
- **Dental wrap-around option.** CHIP allows states to provide dental coverage that "wraps" around commercial medical coverage for children who have commercial medical but no dental insurance.
- **Mandatory performance reporting.** CHIP requires states to report on CHIP dental program performance. It also requires that states obtain such information from managed care plans and other vendors who administer CHIP programs.
- **Quality assurance.** CHIP requires federal reporting on the quality of children's health care under Medicaid and CHIP and specifies that these reports must include information on the efforts undertaken to improve dental care. It also includes language directing the HHS Secretary to engage dental professionals in identifying gaps in and developing priorities related to pediatric quality measures.
- **New parent education.** CHIP requires the HHS secretary to develop a program through which parents of newborns are educated regarding oral health care, the risks for early childhood caries and its prevention, and the need for a dental visit within the first year of life.
- **Allowance of public-private contracting.** CHIP clarifies that federally qualified health centers may contract with private dentists in order to expand their capacity to deliver dental services to their clients.
- **Dental access and midlevel study.** CHIP included language directing the Governmental Accountability Office to conduct a study to examine access to oral health services for children in underserved areas. The study is to explore a broad array of workforce and access topics, including preventive and restorative services provided under Medicaid and SCHIP, availability of providers, access to care for special needs children, and the feasibility of using other qualified providers to improve children's access to oral health services.
- **Mandatory information for beneficiaries.** CHIP requires the development of an internet website and a toll-free hotline to provide enrollees with a complete and accurate list of pediatric dental providers and a description of the dental services available to eligible children.

FOR MORE INFORMATION about this and other child health issues
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