

## Resources to Support School Health Services

It is imperative that school health services receive funding from the health sector to enable school nurses to deliver disease prevention, disease management, and health promotion services. School nurses have the ability to address some of Alaska's most pressing health concerns while providing high quality, cost-effective care. The benefits for schools are improved academic outcomes, decreased absenteeism and dropout rates, enhanced parent and community relationships and satisfaction levels, and strengthened and cost-effective school health programs.

### Financial Support

School districts have used these resources to supplement their school district budget and/or provide needed nursing services for students while at school.

#### *Alaska Medicaid School Based Services*

School health services play an important role in the health care of adolescents and children. Section 1903(c) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) allows state Medicaid programs to reimburse school districts for covered Medicaid services when the services are included in an approved Individualized Education Plan or Individualized Family Service Plan (IEP/IFSP).

School-based services are provided to children who have an IEP/IFSP that includes occupational therapy, physical therapy, speech-language services, hearing services, and/or behavioral health services. A list of approved services that may be reimbursed can be found at [http://medicaidalaska.com/dnld/Fees\\_SBS\\_SFY2013.pdf](http://medicaidalaska.com/dnld/Fees_SBS_SFY2013.pdf). These services must be delivered by one of the following:

- Speech Language Pathologist/Speech Language Pathologist Assistant
- Occupational Therapist/Occupational Therapist Assistant
- Physical Therapist/Physical Therapist Assistant
- Psychologist/Psychological Associate
- Behavioral Health Associate/Behavioral Health Professional
- Nurses licensed under AS 08.68 may provide medication services including medication administration, direct observation, training, and support for students receiving behavioral health services

Alaska Medicaid will enroll a school district as a provider of school-based services for children with disabilities.<sup>i</sup> To qualify as an Alaska Medicaid provider, the school district will enter into an agreement with the Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS) and agree to:

- Comply with all applicable state and federal requirements for billing, auditing and reporting;
- Provide access by DHSS to medical, financial and other recipient records as needed to verify eligibility for services; and
- Pay the state portion of the Alaska Medicaid reimbursement prior to Alaska Medicaid issuing a reimbursement for services rendered

About 86,000 Alaska children ≤ 18 (or approximately 46%) were enrolled in Alaska Medicaid for at least 90 consecutive days in 2012.

#### Useful Contacts and Links:

**Information about Alaska Medicaid School-based Services:** Carrie Truett: (907) 269-4576

**Alaska Medicaid Provider Enrollment:** (907) 644-6800 (option 2) or Toll Free at (800) 770-5650 (option 1, 3)

**Alaska Medicaid Newsletters for Providers:** <http://medicaidalaska.com/providers/newsletter.shtml>

**Information about the new Medicaid Enterprise System:** <http://www.alaskamedicaid.info/index.aspx>

### *Insurance Companies, Foundations and Other Health Providers*

These entities can offer financial support for electronic health records, evaluations and technical assistance. Increased access to data creates more efficient processes and measures outcomes. There are targeted opportunities to scale-up the model in other business relationships. A reduced cost to primary healthcare providers can result from these partnerships. Improved implementation of preventative screening programs, such as Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment (EPSDT) may also result.

## **Partnerships**

School districts have also collaborated with health care organizations to have their staff offer services in the school. Here are examples of benefits to these school partners.

### *Community Health Centers*

Community health centers can provide schools with health providers such as registered nurses, mental health professionals and other clinical services. This expanded, cohesive community partnership operates as a cost-effective full scale extension of the mission to serve the most vulnerable. The benefits for both partners include improved breadth of services offered, increased access to better planning and treatment information, heightened community presence, and increased use of services thereby increasing revenue.

A Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the school district and health center can help define the partnership. The exchange of services may include, for example, a clinic registered nurse stationed in the school on a part-time or full-time basis who offers school nursing services while addressing preventative clinic services such as immunization administration.

Two partnerships have been known to exist in Alaska. Unalaska School District and Copper River School District have both worked with their community health centers to provide the full range of school nursing services.

### *Other potential opportunities for funding*

#### Community Hospitals

Community hospitals can provide nursing support and related hospital services to a critical segment of the population: Alaska's most vulnerable children. With school district and community hospital partnerships, outcomes may include decreased utilization rates (especially emergency room visits), decreased long-term taxpayer costs associated with better focus on early intervention and prevention of chronic diseases, improved primary care infrastructure, increased access to health care data to inform development of/and improve services, strengthened network of primary healthcare providers to support care treatment plans and optimize revenue measured by quality as opposed to quantity.

Seton Hospital in Austin, Texas is an established example of the community hospital/school district partnership.

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<sup>i</sup> As of August 15<sup>th</sup>, Division of Health Care Services will not be accepting new enrollments until its new claims management system (called Enterprise) is up and running (around 10/01/13). Once it is available, providers will be able to enroll directly into Enterprise. For more information about enrolling as an Alaska Medicaid provider contact Xerox Provider Enrollment Department toll free at (800) 770-5650 (option 1,4) or locally at (907) 644-6800 (option 2).