

Access and Affordability Committee
Wyoming Health Care Commission
October 9, 2006
Casper, WY

Members participating: Rick Shum, Lloyd Wilder, Ken Vines, Barb Rea, Cliff Root, John McBride, Dixie Roberts. Via phone: Rex Arney, Darryl Binschadler, Lynn Birleffi, Susan Menghini, Linda O'Grady, Lori Jaspersen, Susie Scott-Mullen (staff).
Guests in attendance: Representative Pete Jorgensen, Patty Guzman, Dan Neal

Patty Guzman from the Wyoming State Children's Health Insurance Program (Kid Care CHIP) shared with the A&A committee a situation involving the Bush Administration and the funding of the S-CHIP program. There is a Bush Administration proposal to reduce the allotment to states as a mechanism to cover the funding shortfalls that many states are experiencing. If the proposal goes through, Wyoming will lose just over \$4.7 million. Patty explained the loss would greatly affect WY's ability to provide coverage to children enrolled, as well as the ability to implement the CHIP 4 parents program. Patty went on to say there is also the possibility that Congress will not reauthorize SCHIP, and in that case, Wyoming will not have enough money to run its program each year.

Dixie suggested that the Commission utilize Susan Anderson to contact staff persons of the State's Congressional representatives regarding the importance of maintaining funding for Wyoming's SCHIP program to avoid reducing eligibility, eliminating benefits, increasing beneficiary cost sharing, cutting provider payments and not implementing the CHIP 4 Parents program. The committee agreed the SCHIP Program has been a very effective means of reducing the number of uninsured and would like to it to continue.

Rex asked the three A&A committee members who has participated in the recent conference call with Dr. Jon Gruber to share with the other committee members what they took away from the conversation. The committee is interested in having Jon Gruber model, and quantify some of the initial proposals the committee is currently considering. Ken Vines, Barb Rea, Rex Arney and Susie Mullen (staff) participated in the call with Gruber. "Take aways" from the call included:

- By more clearly defining our target population, we can more clearly determine the cost.
- We would need an actuary to do the numbers for reinsurance
- We're talking access rather than affordability
- Gruber can do more than just modeling for us; i.e. use of uncompensated care dollars for covering the uninsured.
- we're talking access, with a long-term goal of having everyone covered
- exploration of using the uncompensated care dollars for covering the uninsured needs to be pursued as we are already paying that tax.

The committee agreed with Rex's suggestion that all the considered target populations (Medicaid eligible/non-enrolled, low-income/Medicaid non-eligible, middle,upper income/uninsured) be quantified and cost analyzed by Dr. Gruber. In the event having all the populations quantified would be too expensive, or if the quantification of a particular population reveals a significant cost, the committee was asked to prioritize the three populations under consideration should a particular population(s) need to be eliminated from consideration. The populations were prioritized in the following order:

1. low income, Medicaid non-eligible.
2. Medicaid eligible, non-enrolled
3. middle-upper income, uninsured

The committee also decided that a number of options also being considered are actually more programmatic in nature and should be presented to Jon Gruber as tools rather than a component to be quantified, i.e. mandating coverage for students attending state supported higher education facilities.

The committee built a list of "tools" to be submitted to Gruber as "still on the table" as a mechanism to lower the number of uninsured. At the committee's instruction, Dr. Gruber will develop a cost and quantification of applying these tools to any/all of the targeted populations as a means of covering the uninsured. The list of tools to be submitted to Gruber for his calculating included:

- expansion of existing public programs
- subsidizing the high risk pool
- uncompensated care fund
- mandated student coverage
- incentivized employer coverage
- reinsurance

There were additional thoughts shared by committee members regarding the possibility of utilizing uncompensated care dollars to insure the uninsured. It was suggested it will be important to get feed back from providers regarding the uncompensated care dollars.

The committee is aware of the fact Dr. Gruber's fees will be based on what particular tasks we ask him to complete. Dr. Gruber indicated he should be able to provide our needed information in a fairly quickly.

As next steps, Rex and Susie will contact Dr. Gruber with the instructions from the committee as to the scope of his work. Susie will send to A&A members a description of Gruber's scope of work prior to Rex and Susie contacting Jon Gruber. In the interest of transparency, all email communication with Jon Gruber will be copied to members of the A&A committee.

Meeting was adjourned at 11:27 a.m.