

Topics covered in the workgroup included ten year trend data for Orange County, county and statewide efforts to cover all kids and coverage expansion opportunities under the new federal waiver. To preface the day's discussion, ITUP staff provided a 2005 data summary of Orange County from 1996 through 2004 highlighting significant trends, accomplishments and opportunities. The 2005 Overview of the Uninsured in Orange County and additional regional and county overviews can be viewed on our website: <http://www.itup.org/workgroup.html>.

Orange County and Statewide Efforts to Cover All Kids

The Children's Health Initiative of Orange County is making strides creating a program to cover the uninsured children living in the county. Currently, Orange County does not operate any public health insurance programs for children; three private programs offer insurance products to children who are not eligible for Medi-Cal or Healthy Families. CHIOC has built a strong coalition of members and supporters, operating various task forces and identifying areas for immediate improvement. The goal of covering all kids under 300% of FPL might only be achieved locally with the creation of a third product offered either by CalOptima or Health Net or a Healthy Families buy-in program for children up to 250% of FPL. The passage of the Tobacco Tax Act of 2006, which provides \$371 million annually for a statewide health insurance program for children, would also achieve this goal.

A campaign initiated by the Children's Health Initiative of Orange County in partnership with St. Joseph Health System to achieve 100% coverage of all children school by school achieved great success at Melrose Elementary School. A majority of uninsured children qualified for CaliforniaKids or Kaiser Child Health Plan. Following the campaign, 96% of students were insured compared to 74% before the campaign; and school attendance rose. This campaign lends the additional benefit of decreased school per diem dollars lost to absenteeism.

Coverage Expansion Opportunities under the Healthcare Coverage Initiative

As part of the new federal Medicaid Section 1115 waiver, \$180 million is available in years three through five of the waiver for coverage expansion. In order to access the federal funds, county entities or the state must have adequate CPEs (certified public expenditures). The California Department of Health Services has outlined guiding principles and initiated a series of stakeholder meetings to inform the design of the waiver amendment to be submitted to CMS by September 1, 2006.

In Orange County, the MSI program seems like a natural recipient for a portion of the CI funds. The program has adequate CPEs as match to draw down federal funds and the ability to spend allocated funds in their entirety in every year of the waiver. Since CI funds can only go towards coverage expansions, the MSI program is considering several expansion options:

- Expand eligibility
- Expand covered services
- Expand and improve medical homes for the uninsured
- Enhance reimbursement for services already being provided

There are several key unresolved issues of the waiver including:

- 1) What will the waiver amendment look like?
- 2) How will the funds be allocated: through a competitive grants process, based on need or some other system?

Summary of Recommendations

Participants shared their recommendations and priorities for expanding coverage of the uninsured in Orange County.

- 1) Cover all kids through a local sustainable third product or the passage of the Tobacco Tax Act of 2006
- 2) Expand and maintain access to health services
- 3) Secure coverage initiative funds to expand coverage for adults