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CKF News

January Coalition Meeting

Click [here](#) to listen to the recording of the January Coalition Meeting.

Policy Updates

Future of CHP+

The Senate and House of Representatives passed a continuing resolution today that funds the federal government through February 8, 2018. The resolution includes a six-year funding extension for CHIP (Children's Health Insurance Program). The president is expected to sign the bill today. Once the president signs it, the government shutdown will end, and federal funding for CHIP will be reinstated. It is currently unclear when Colorado will receive federal funding for CHP+ (Child Health Plan Plus). CKF will be sure to continue to share timely updates about the impact on CHP+. Click [here](#) for more information.

CMS Medicaid Work Requirement

The Center for Medicaid & Medicare Services (CMS) issued a [memo](#) indicating that states can now test work requirements as a condition for Medicaid coverage. The document details who should be excluded from the new work requirements, and which activities will be counted as "work". Ten states have applied for a federal waiver to add a work requirement, and officials in several other states have expressed interest in the idea. This does not appear to align with Colorado's legislative interests, as Lieutenant Governor Donna Lynne [stated](#) that Colorado has

no plans to implement a new work requirement at this time. Click [here](#) to learn more about this policy.

Co-Payment Changes for Health First Colorado Members

The Department of Health Care Policy and Financing (HCPF) has announced changes to co-payment policies for Health First Colorado effective January 1, 2018. Health First Colorado members' co-pays for outpatient hospital visits increased from \$3 to \$4, while co-pays increased from \$3 to \$6 for emergency room visits when the client is not experiencing an emergency, and has a service performed that does not require an overnight hospital stay. Co-pays for generic drugs increased from \$1 to \$3. Click [here](#) to learn more about these changes.

Health First Colorado will no longer require a co-pay for any of the seven Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved nicotine replacement therapies and non-nicotine containing medications. A prior authorization request (PAR) must be submitted in most instances for over-the-counter and prescription medications. Health First Colorado also covers tobacco cessation counseling services for members who smoke, or are at risk of smoking, without co-pay. Click [here](#) to learn more about tobacco cessation support for members of Health First Colorado.

The Individual Mandate

You may have heard that the tax bill that passed last month repealed the individual mandate -- the provision in the Affordable Care Act (ACA) that requires most people to have health insurance --, but this is not entirely correct. The tax bill repealed the tax penalty which is used to enforce the mandate, but the mandate remains in effect. This means that Americans are still required to have minimum essential coverage according to the ACA, but after 2018, they will no longer be required to pay a penalty in their taxes if they lack coverage. The penalty is still in place for 2018, and the repeal of the penalty will go into effect in 2019. Click [here](#) to read an overview by In The Loop (requires login), or [here](#) for an overview by the Health Affairs blog.

Outreach and Enrollment

PEAK Technical Support Center

The PEAK Technical Support Center offers support to clients and assisters who are experiencing technical difficulties with the PEAK website including password resets. Users can contact the support call center at 1-800-250-7741, or message the help desk at CBMS.Help@state.co.us. Click [here](#) to learn more about the PEAK Technical Support Center.

Resources

Colorado Blueprint to End Hunger

Covering Kids and Families was proud to serve on the steering committee for the Colorado Blueprint to End Hunger, released on January 17. Visit endhungerco.org to view the [report](#) and learn about how your organization can get involved.

Colorado interChange Known Issues and Updates

HCPF compiled stakeholder feedback regarding issues with the interChange to inform the Department's "Known Issues and Updates" page. The Department will continue to provide updated resources based on the feedback it receives. Click [here](#) to find relevant information about known issues and updates, and click [here](#) for a specific fact sheet which includes steps for members to take to correct discrepancies between the provider portal and CBMS.

January's HIL Messaging – Health Plan Basics

Are you looking for ways to educate your followers about basic health insurance terms and concepts? Join the health insurance literacy (HIL) movement's efforts to inform consumers about the basics of health care plans. Click [here](#) to find relevant messaging for consumers and stakeholders.

December PEAK and CBMS Changes

The Office of Information and Technology (OIT) published a fact sheet that summarizes the new build updates in CBMS and PEAK in December 2017. These changes have been put in effect to decrease application processing times, reduce errors, and improve the overall user and customer experience. Click [here](#) to learn about these updates, and their potential impact on community partners.

Increasing Health Care Access to Teens through Medicaid and CHIP Webinar

Teens are among the healthiest populations in the U.S., but they are less likely to be enrolled in health coverage than younger children. This lack of coverage limits their access to vital health services during a crucial time in their physical and mental development. Coverage through Medicaid and CHIP helps establish positive health outcomes for teens, and some groups have learned that engaging teens through outreach and enrollment efforts increases teens' access to care. The Connecting Kids to Coverage National Campaign is hosting a webinar on **Wednesday, January 24** at 1:00 p.m. MT, to share effective outreach and enrollment practices to reach and enroll eligible teens in Medicaid and CHIP. Click [here](#) to register.

Piton Foundation Taxathon 2018

The Piton Foundation is hosting its annual Taxathon—12 hours of free tax preparation for Coloradans with annual incomes of \$54,000 or less. Taxathon will take place at Denver's [Mile High United Way](#) on **Saturday, February 3** from 8:30 a.m. - 8:30 p.m. Walk-ins will be accepted, and tax filers can also book an appointment in advance. Click [here](#) to schedule an appointment, or call 303-454-3758.

Upcoming Calls, Trainings, and Events

DHS Health Navigator Training

Denver Human Services (DHS) offers a navigator training for community partners. The navigator training includes an overview of the programs DHS offers, including food assistance, basic eligibility for Health First Colorado and cash programs, energy assistance, child support, childcare assistance program, PEAK, and a brief overview of the ACA. For more information and to register, please contact Kathy Crusan-Ford, Agency Trainer for SNAP Into Health, at Kathleen.Crusan-Ford@denvergov.org. The upcoming trainings will be held:

- **Friday, January 26** from 9:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. 1200 Federal Blvd., Room 1019, Denver
- **Wednesday, January 31** from 9:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. 1200 Federal Blvd., Room 1056, Denver
- **Friday, February 23** from 9:00 a.m.- 12:30 p.m. 1200 Federal Blvd., Room 1019, Denver
- **Wednesday, February 28** from 9:00 a.m.- 12:30 p.m. 1200 Federal Blvd., Room 1056, Denver

Patients for Affordable Drugs Advocacy Training

The Colorado Consumer Health Initiative (CCHI) is partnering with Patients for Affordable Drugs and local organizations to host an in-person patient advocacy training. Attendees will learn

about the legislative process in Colorado, and how to use personal experiences with prescription drug prices to advocate for better drug-pricing policies. Click [here](#) to register.

- **Saturday, February 3** from 8:30 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. 1001 Bannock Street, Denver

Health Care Day of Action

CCHI is hosting its tenth annual Health Care Day of Action. This event is an opportunity for consumers and advocates from all over Colorado to discuss important policy issues, and engage legislators on current health care policy in our state. Click [here](#) to register and learn more.

- **Thursday, February 22** from 8:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. 1373 Grant Street, Denver

What We're Reading

Hospitals in States That Expand Medicaid Are Less Likely to Close

A recent study done by researchers at the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus found that hospitals in states that expanded Medicaid were about six times as likely to close than hospitals in non-expansion states. Click [here](#) for the NPR report about how Medicaid payments help hospitals meet their bottom line.

SNAP is Linked with Improved Nutritional Outcomes and Lower Health Care Costs

A new report from the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities explores the connections between the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), improved health outcomes, and lower health care costs. Click [here](#) to learn more about how SNAP impacts health, and health care.