



Texas Children's  
Health Plan  
A Subsidiary of Texas Children's Hospital

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# Provider NEWS

April 2003

## TCHP providers asked to refer complicated otolaryngology cases to Baylor sub-specialists

Texas Children's Health Plan (TCHP) otolaryngology referrals for CHIP and STAR members should be focused on tertiary-level complications to improve access for members.

Children under age 3 with any otolaryngology diagnosis can be referred to Baylor College of Medicine Pediatric Otolaryngology sub-specialists. For referrals, providers may call 832-822-3341.

Working with TCHP, Baylor's Pediatric Otolaryngology section in the Texas Children's Hospital Clinical Care Center has refocused its care and services to CHIP and Medicaid members with severe and complicated conditions. This refocusing better matches children with complex health needs with the clinical expertise available in the network.

The following otolaryngology specialists are affiliated under this new collaboration.

- **Dr. Ellen Friedman, FAAP, FACS** – Chief, Pediatric Otolaryngology Service; Chief, Speech Pathology Section; Chief, Otolaryngology Clinic; and Professor, Baylor College of Medicine.
- **Dr. Carla Giannoni** – Assistant Professor; Director, Pediatric Otolaryngology Residence Program, Baylor College of Medicine

- **Dr. Spiros Manolidis** – Chief, Hearing Clinic; and Assistant Professor, Baylor College of Medicine
- **Dr. Marcelle Sulek** – Assistant Professor, Baylor College of Medicine
- **Dr. Michael Stewart** – Assistant Professor, Baylor College of Medicine

Additionally, the following diagnoses or procedures for all children of all ages can be referred to Baylor Pediatric Otolaryngology sub-specialists:

- Acute or chronic sinusitis
- Airway malformation
- Airway obstruction
- Choanal atresia
- Cholesteatoma, acquired or congenital
- Chronic cough
- Common diagnoses in uncommon patients (i.e. patients with cystic fibrosis, congenital cardiac diagnoses, cancer, etc.)
- Congenital malformations of the ear
- Deviated-nasal septum
- Head or neck tumor
- Laryngeal pathology
- Laser surgery
- Mastoiditis
- Microtia

(See Otolaryngology on Page 4.)

## TCHP announces after-hours survey progress

Texas Children's Health Plan primary-care providers received an after-hours survey phone call from Provider Relations in March. The annual survey is part of an effort to ensure TCHP members are able to access care on an after-hours basis. The brief survey measured each office's ability to comply with established after-hours accessibility standards.

TCHP Provider Relations called each PCP after normal business hours to ensure that access

to medical care is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. TCHP guidelines require PCPs to have an answering service that is able to reach the physician, an answering machine indicating how to reach the physician or another provider accepting calls. Providers should return pages or messages within 30 minutes.

Results of the March survey will be reported to the Medical Advisory Committee and distributed to participating providers within two months.

## TCHP acquires AmCare First Medicaid product

Texas Children's Health Plan (TCHP) acquired the AmCare First Medicaid product on Dec. 1, 2002. It now is known as Texas Children's STAR Health Coverage.

This acquisition allows TCHP to move from being a secondary to a primary Medicaid contractor.

TCHP provider relations representatives are working diligently to ensure all providers are in-serviced in a timely manner for Texas Children's STAR Health Coverage. Providers who have not had the opportunity to meet with their provider relations representative should contact the Provider Relations Line at 832-824-2695 to schedule a meeting.

### Not accepting electronic claims

At this time, TCHP is not accepting electronic claims for Texas Children's STAR. TCHP is working hard to expedite this process so electronic claims can be submitted in the future, and will notify all providers as soon as this has been completed.

Until then, providers should submit all Texas Children's STAR claims on paper to the following address:

P.O. Box 300286  
Houston, Texas 77230-0286

### Where to call with questions

Providers with questions regarding AmCare First Medicaid claims for dates of service prior to Dec. 1, 2002, should contact AmCare at 713-985-4100.

For inquiries about Texas Children's STAR claims for dates of service on or after Dec. 1, 2002, contact TCHP at 832-824-2600.

Texas Children's STAR, a part of the State of Texas Access Reform (STAR) program, is available to Medicaid patients in Brazoria, Fort Bend, Galveston, Harris, Montgomery and Waller counties. Texas Children's STAR provides healthcare services for children, pregnant women and adults.

TCHP provides four health coverage options: Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), Individual Medical Coverage, HMO Blue STAR and STAR Health Coverage. Approximately 27,000 members are enrolled in Texas Children's STAR Health Coverage, bringing total TCHP membership to 105,000 members.

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## Providers should consult product lists before referring

Texas Children's Health Plan offers four HMO products: HMO Blue STAR, the Children's Health Insurance Program, Texas Children's Individual Medical Coverage and Texas Children's STAR Health Coverage.

Contractual relationships may vary from one provider group to the next, so providers must know exactly which products are included in their TCHP contracts.

When referring a member to a specialist, it is important to know if the physician

to whom the member is being referred participates in the member's plan.

This information can be found in the "Directory of Participating PCPs" and the "Directory of Participating SCPs." TCHP distributes these lists to all participating providers on a quarterly basis.

Physicians' names are listed along the left margin of the report, while product names are listed across the top of the report. Physicians who participate in the HMO Blue STAR program, CHIP, Texas

Children's Individual Medical Coverage, or Texas Children's STAR Health Coverage have an "effective date" in the cell labeled with that product.

A blank cell indicates the physician is not participating in a product and referrals for that product should be directed to a physician participating in the member's plan. Providers who have additional questions about referrals should contact a TCHP provider relations representative at 832-824-2695.

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## Providers asked to evaluate Texas Children's Health Plan

Each March, Texas Children's Health Plan mails "Provider Satisfaction Surveys" to all network primary-care providers and specialists. Providers have the opportunity to assess TCHP's performance in each area of the organization, includ-

ing Claims Operations, Medical Management, Member Services and Network Development. Please take a moment to complete the survey. Providers' candid answers will help TCHP improve its service to providers.



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# Determining procedure for obtaining prior authorizations

Providers often find it difficult to remember whether the primary-care provider or the specialist should initiate a prior authorization for services.

Listed below are two scenarios designed to help alleviate the confusion.

## Scenario 1:

A PCP refers a Texas Children's Health Plan member to an in-network specialist. The specialist determines hospitalization is needed. Who is responsible for obtaining the authorization?

## Solution:

The TCHP provider with the most current medical information about the member should initiate the Prior-Authorization Request. In this case, the in-network specialist should initiate the request.

Services requiring prior authorization must be phoned in to 832-824-7648, or faxed to 832-825-2499. The Prior-Authorization Request form should be used.

## Helpful hints:

- Give TCHP Medical Management three to five business days notice of the scheduled date of service which requires prior authorization. Call 832-824-7635 with Prior-Authorization Requests for medically urgent services.
- The TCHP provider with the most current medical information about the member should initiate the Prior-Authorization Request. If the treating provider is an out-of-network provider, then the primary-care provider will be responsible for obtaining the authorization.
- TCHP providers can initiate a Prior-Authorization Request by faxing the Prior Authorization form to TCHP at 832-825-2499.
- When submitting a Prior-Authorization Request, supply all information pertaining to a patient's care (i.e., member name and ID, admitting diagnosis, type of admission or procedure, treatment plan and date of injury or illness.)
- Refer to the "Prior Authorizations" section of the TCHP Provider Manual for a detailed list of services that require prior authorization.
- The Medical Management Department will review all requests for services. Requests failing to meet clinical criteria will be referred to TCHP Medical Director for review.
- When submitting claims, the authorization number should be indicated clearly on the claim form.

## Scenario 2:

A PCP refers a Texas Children's Health Plan member to a specialist. The specialist evaluates the patient and determines the patient needs emergency surgery.

The available surgeon is not in the TCHP network. Who is responsible for getting the authorization?

## Solution:

If the treating physician is an out-of-network provider, then the PCP is responsible for obtaining the authorization.

In this instance, the PCP should initiate the prior authorization. The surgeon is not in the Texas Children's Health Plan network and would not have access to TCHP's medical management policies and procedures.

Providers who have questions about authorizations should call TCHP's Provider Relations Department at 832-824-2695.

## Claims management made easier with convenient Web-based system

Texas Children's Health Plan offers a Web-based eligibility and claims status system called eSTEPP, where providers can view claims status and verify member eligibility in real time.

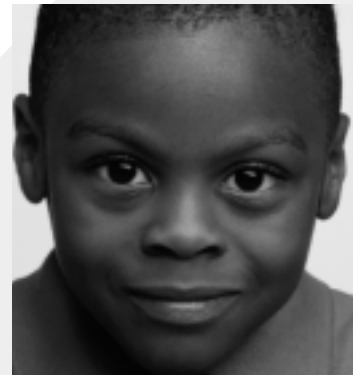
eSTEPP allows providers the ability to view the same information as TCHP computer systems. By logging onto the Internet and eSTEPP, provider offices can access this information without speaking to a member services representative.

Provider computers must have Explorer 5.0 or higher, with 128-bit encryption installed on a Windows-based computer system. Providers interested in obtaining an application to install eSTEPP should contact their TCHP provider relations representatives.

## Fax Recall provides information after hours

Texas Children's Health Plan's automated Fax Recall system allows TCHP providers to check eligibility, benefits and claims status after hours. The service is available 24 hours a day, Monday through Saturday.

Providers may call 832-825-7921 and enter the member's identification number and the provider's fax number. The requested information will be faxed to the provider's office within three minutes. For additional information about Fax Recall, please contact a TCHP provider relations representative at 832-824-2695.



## Providers should use metered-dose inhalers to treat asthma

Texas Children's Health Plan is encouraging its providers to use metered-dose inhalers (MDIs) to treat children with asthma. Nebulizers have been considered the standard of care for treating asthma in children. However, recent pediatric literature has shown an MDI with spacers is at least equivalent to the nebulizer in delivering aerosolized medications to children with wheezing.

The January 2003 issue of *Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine* evalu-

ated emergency room use of MDIs for children aged 2 months to 24 months. The study found children treated with MDIs were less likely to be admitted and required less medication than those treated with nebulizers.

As a result of these findings, Texas Children's Hospital began the routine use of MDIs for inpatient services, and has shown a decrease in the cost of care and medication without compromising quality service. Use in the hospital has shown that

MDIs facilitate earlier patient discharge because there is minimal need for training and equipment procurement. Parents or guardians can administer MDIs.

The Texas Children's Gordon Emergency Center will begin using MDIs in the next few months.

TCHP members may obtain spacers with their prescriptions at any in-network pharmacy without pre-authorization. Providers and members will find MDIs cost-effective, easy to use and portable.

## ImmTrac allows statewide access to immunization records

ImmTrac, a statewide immunization registry developed by the Texas Department of Health and Electronic Data Systems, provides access to a statewide immunization database.

With a parent's consent, the ImmTrac database can receive vaccination information for a child from anywhere in Texas. This information includes input from the Bureau of Vital Statistics, Women, Infant and Children clinics, Medicaid, the Integrated Client Encounter System, and private healthcare providers. With ImmTrac, authorized providers can view an electronic record of a child's immunizations. This will help ensure that when it's time for an immunization the child will receive only the shots needed.

It is important that authorized providers comply with the requirements of ImmTrac as stated in Chapter 161 of the

Health and Safety Code. Providers should:

1. protect the confidentiality of patients in accordance with section 159.002, Occupations Code.
2. inform a parent, managing conservator or guardian of a patient about the registry.
3. require the written consent of a parent, managing conservator or guardian of a patient before any information relating to the patient is included in the registry.
4. permit a parent, managing conservator or guardian to withdraw consent for the patient to be included in the registry.

For further information regarding ImmTrac, contact the Texas Department of Health at 1-800-252-9152 or e-mail [ImmTrac@tdh.state.tx.us](mailto:ImmTrac@tdh.state.tx.us).

*Adapted from the Texas Department of Health Web site*

## TexMedNet incorrectly identifies some members

TexMedNet is identifying some AmCare members as Texas Children's STAR members incorrectly.

The Texas Children's STAR program began operation on Dec. 1, 2002, with the acquisition of the AmCare STAR product and did not accept any liability for AmCare membership prior to that date. Therefore, claims or appeals for membership with dates of service prior to Dec. 1, 2002 should be sent directly to AmCare.

When providers check eligibility for Dec. 1, 2002, forward, TexMedNet will identify the members as Texas Children's STAR. However, due to computer-system limitations at the state of Texas, the TexMedNet system incorrectly identifies AmCare members prior to Dec. 1, 2002, as belonging to Texas Children's STAR.

### Otolaryngology (continued from Page 1)

- Neck masses
- Obstructive-sleep apnea
- Profound sensorineural hearing loss (cochlear implants)
- Severe conductive hearing loss
- Tympanic membrane perforation

By adjusting referrals for CHIP and Medicaid members with these diagnoses or needing these procedures, TCHP and Baylor can better serve tertiary-level otolaryngology patients and improve access. Referrals for pri-

mary otolaryngology services should be sent to other TCHP contracted subspecialists as identified in the updated TCHP "Directory of Specialist Physicians." This directory is distributed to providers' offices on a quarterly basis.

For further assistance, call Christopher M. Born, TCHP president, at 832-824-2326.

Thank you for your cooperation and continuing to serve Texas Children's CHIP and Medicaid population.

# Verifying Texas Children’s Health Plan member eligibility prior to treating is provider’s responsibility

Providers are responsible for verifying Texas Children’s Health Plan member eligibility prior to providing care. Tools that can help include member-identification cards, telephone verification, Fax Recall and eSTEPP.

## Member identification cards

Both commercial- and Medicaid-HMO members should present an identification card at the time of service. Commercial-HMO members who have not yet received an identification card may present an enrollment form as proof of eligibility.

Medicaid-HMO members may also present Form 3087 or Form 1027 from the Texas Department of Human Services as proof of identification, in addition to the HMO-identification card. Form 3087 is the monthly Medical Care Identification that HHSC mails to all Medicaid-eligible members. Form 1027

is the initial Medicaid Verification Letter. The form or letter will indicate the month of eligibility and whether the member is a STAR-Medicaid or traditional-Medicaid member.

## Telephone verification

HMO-identification cards identify members; they do not confirm eligibility. Member eligibility can change on a monthly basis without notice. In addition to asking members to show a member-identification card, providers should call the customer-service unit of the member’s primary HMO to verify eligibility. If TCHP is the primary HMO, providers can use the Fax Recall or eSTEPP systems to collect eligibility information.

TCHP recommends providers verify eligibility through all available means prior to providing care to members.

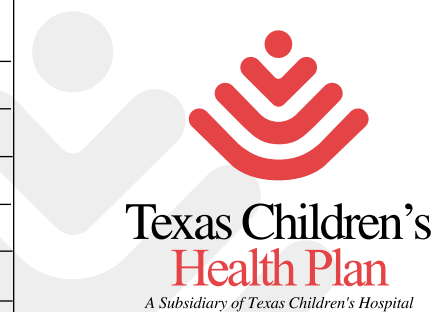
# Provider relations representatives improve communication

Texas Children’s Health Plan would like to welcome all new physicians into the provider network. In an effort to encourage positive communication, each participating provider office has been designated a provider relations representative.

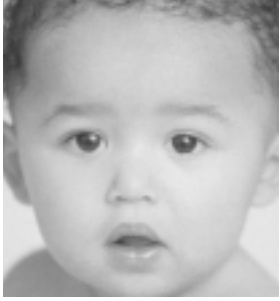
The provider relations representative is available to assist with any issues that may arise regarding TCHP and has the ability to advocate between a provider’s office and any department within TCHP.

Providers who have not had the opportunity to meet with their provider relations representatives should contact the Provider Relations Line at 832-824-2695 to schedule a meeting. TCHP’s provider relations representatives are listed below.

TCHP provider relations representatives	Geographic territory	Phone number
Mike Banda	North, northwest	832-824-6974
Denise Blakeslee	North, northeast	832-824-6979
Denise Evans-Turner	South, southwest	832-824-2963
Lucie Lara	East	832-824-6890
Susie Mancillas	West	832-824-6903
Roland Munguia	South	832-824-6855



# Support for children's health coverage needed



The health coverage of many Texas Children's Health Plan members may be in danger. The 78th legislature of the state of Texas is considering making dramatic cuts to the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) and Medicaid as a way to trim down the budget deficit. If this occurs, thousands of young Texans will be denied access to affordable

healthcare and the additional cost burden transferred to taxpayers, physicians and hospitals.

TCHP providers are encouraged to let their state officials know that if the proposed budget cuts are made, thousands of needy and deserving children, including many TCHP members, will lose their health coverage.

"It is critical that we communicate to our legislators that such cuts would be disastrous for patients and would adversely affect the ability of children's hospitals statewide to fulfill their patient care missions," said **Mark A. Wallace**, president and chief executive officer of Texas Children's Hospital. "We need to make sure that our elected officials hear from their constituents."

It's quick and easy to contact state officials and urge them not to cut this critical funding. Simply visit the CHATvocracy Web site and follow these instructions to send a message to your state representative:

1. Go to the CHATvocracy Web site, [www.childhealthtx.org](http://www.childhealthtx.org).
2. Click on New: Chatvocracy.
3. Click on Action Alert! – Protect CHIP and Medicaid for Children!
4. Enter your home zip code (depending on zip code, you may have to enter complete home address).
5. A template letter will appear. Enter "No Cuts for Kids" in subject line. You may add a personal statement in the template.
6. Make sure you enter your home address and click on "send message." Your letter will be sent to your designated representatives.
7. A confirmation from your representative will be sent to you within a few days.

## Helpful resources provide current information on STDs

It is important to Texas Children's Health Plan that providers and members have the most current information on the prevention, detection and effective treatment of STDs, including HIV.

For up-to-date information, contact The Texas Department of Health's Bureau of HIV/STD Prevention at 512-490-2505 or call the Texas HIV/STD InfoLine (English and Spanish) at

1-800-299-2437. Its Web site, [www.tdh.state.tx.us/hivstd/](http://www.tdh.state.tx.us/hivstd/), also is a helpful resource.

Providers and members also can call national organizations for information and brochures on the prevention, detection and effective treatment of STDs, including HIV. Call the National STD Hotline at 1-800-227-8922 or the National AIDS Hotline at 1-800-342-AIDS.

## Committee issues new immunization recommendations

On January 30, the Medical Advisory Committee reviewed and approved the 2003 Recommended Childhood and Adolescent Immunization Schedule released by the American Academy of Pediatrics. This year's recommendations include a catch-up schedule. Both schedules have been enclosed for your reference.

## Texas Children's Hospital Mission and Values

### *Texas Children's Hospital Integrated Delivery System Mission Statement:*

To support excellence in patient care, education and research with a commitment to quality service and cost-effective care to enhance the health and well-being of children locally, nationally and internationally.

### *Texas Children's Hospital Integrated Delivery System Value Statement:*

To support the elements of the Vision and Mission with an added commitment to family-centered care, ethical behavior, integrity and respect.