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## New Flu Vaccine

**Note: Reposted Updated Article**

### *FDA approves FluMist, a new flu vaccine*

On January 5, 2007, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved a new refrigerator-stable intranasal live influenza virus vaccine, whose trade name is *FluMist*. *FluMist* is licensed for healthy persons from 5 to 49 years old. Current Medicaid policy includes various influenza vaccines as a benefit for clients but *FluMist* is currently not a covered benefit. The Texas Vaccines for Children (TVFC) Program provides these other vaccine products (see <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/about/qa/nasalspray.htm>).

*FluMist* is supplied intranasal delivery in packages of 10 pre-filled, single-use sprayers. It is shipped frozen and upon receipt, must be refrigerated at 2 to 8° c (35-46° f). *FluMist* must not be frozen and must be used before the expiration date. Additional information is available on the FDA web site at <http://www.fda.gov/cber/label/inflmed010507LB.pdf> and <http://www.fda.gov/cber/products/inflmed010507.htm>.

## Upcoming Events

### Regional Monthly Conference Call

The next regional monthly conference call is scheduled for April 5, 2007, at 10:00 a.m. CST. Please submit agenda items to [Marty Darnell](mailto:Marty.Darnell@txhealthsteps.com), Program Specialist, THSteps Central Office, by the 5:00 p.m., March 26, 2007.

### 2007 Diversity in Health Professions Regional Conferences

Six regional conferences to be held entitled *Promoting Diversity in Health*

*Workforce Education: Evidence-Based Best Practices for Dissemination and Action Planning*. The conferences focus on increasing the number of underrepresented students entering health related academic programs, and embracing regionally reflected issues and solutions. See the links below for details:

- [Austin](#)-April 19, 2007
- [El Paso](#)-May 2007
- [Houston](#)-June 12, 2007
- [McAllen](#)-July 12-13, 2007

Conference tracks will address the needs of *Underrepresented Populations, Healthcare Disciplines, Stakeholders and Issues*. It will also promote collaboration of multiple sectors on all aspects of becoming a health care professional, including students, practitioners, employers, faculty, and community organizations. Interested in presenting? Contact Lynn Heimerl 512/472-8921 For more information or to register visit: [www.hwdc.org](http://www.hwdc.org).

For registration information, contact Center for Health Promotion & Disease Prevention Research in Underserved Populations (CHPR) at <mailto:chpr@utexas.nur.mail.edu> or 512-471-9910. To view the brochure visit: <http://www.utexas.edu/nursing/chpr/conference.html>.

## Newborn Screening Training

*THSteps Newborn Screening training now available online*

The first in a series of computer-based training modules is now available for Medicaid/THSteps providers at <http://txhealthsteps.com/>. This first module deals with Newborn Screening (NBS).

The online course catalogue can be viewed at



<http://txhealthsteps.com/catalog/?caid=81>. It provides an overview of the FREE courses offered on this site. Upon successful completion of the NBS course, participants will earn 1.0 contact hour credit for the following certifications:

- Newborn Screening
- Newborn Screening for CHES
- Newborn Screening for Nurses
- Newborn Screening for Physicians and Physician Assistants
- Newborn Screening for Social Workers

## DSHS Lab Reminder

*THSteps staff to remind providers to use new lab requisition forms*

According to the DSHS Laboratory, THSteps providers are continuing to use outdated laboratory requisition forms. Older versions of the form may not include information the lab needs currently to process specimens. This may result in delays in reporting test results and/or rejections of specimens. Please remind providers to use the following forms.

- G-1B Specimen Submission Form (Mar 2006) Rev. 6
- G-2A Specimen Submission Form (Mar 2006) Rev. 1
- G-2B Specimen Submission Form (Mar 2006) Rev. 1

Please call 1-888-963-7111 x7578 if you need new forms.

In addition, the DSHS Lab observing errors in the specimen date of collection (DOC) that providers are entering. For example, providers have entered 1/12/06 rather than entering the correct date of 1/12/07 (note the year is incorrect). Due to the DSHS Lab's licensing requirements, it will reject all specimens submitted with incorrect DOC.

Should you have questions, please visit the DSHS Laboratory web site at [http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/lab/cc\\_spec-](http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/lab/cc_spec-)

[col.shtm#General](#) to access general information on a variety of topics or contact the DSHS Laboratory at 1-888-963-7111x6030 or (512) 458-7111x6030.

## Immigrant and Refugee Health Grants

*Improving the Health of Immigrant and Refugee Communities Grant*

Today, more than 30 million immigrants and refugees live in the

United States. Often they have higher rates of chronic health problems due in part to the difficulties encountered when trying to obtain appropriate social and health services. Language barriers, lack of education, and cultural differences make it harder for immigrants and refugees to obtain culturally appropriate services, outreach, or other information that could help them live healthier lives. To provide immigrants and refugees with the tools they need to improve and maintain their health, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation is offering grants up to \$300,000 (maximum grant award) for up to three years. To be eligible for the grant, applicants should be either a public entity or a nonprofit organization

### Questions and Answers

**Question:** How far back will Medicaid pay?

**Answer:** If the entity that is being paid is a **Private** entity, then Medicaid can pay back as far as needed. If the entity is a **Public** entity, then it falls under the 8 Quarter Rule. So on a Public entity, through March 31, 2007 the farthest Medicaid can go back is a Service Date of April 2005. Each quarter the cutoff date changes. **Please refer calls on this issue to Rosemary Morris at Central Office.**

**Question:** A County Health Department requested a list of the THSteps clients who are behind or delinquent, and not up to date for their area. Is it possible to generate such a list?

**Answer:** THSteps is not able to provide a listing to the County Health Department of all children due/overdue in their county due to HIPAA considerations. THSteps encourages the County Health Department to talk with the Immunization Branch to discuss possible uses of ImmTrac data to meet their need.

**Question:** What, if any, will the role of the THSteps PR's be in the CHIP Perinatal program?

**Answer:** Regional provider representatives should have a general knowledge about the CHIP Perinatal Program so that they can assist or refer as needed. Fact sheet and other critical information can be obtained through the following link: [http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/mch/default.shtm#CHIP\\_perinatal](http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/mch/default.shtm#CHIP_perinatal).

**Question:** What is the correct diagnosis code to use with immunizations given in or outside of a medical checkup?

**Answer:** There are many changes in vaccines, both in availability and coding we will keep you informed as best we can as that information becomes available. THSteps and the Immunization Branch committed to getting a reference guide for all policy changes related to immunizations. The policy was signed off in BMW, which means it has HHSC approval. However some of the coding changes are extensive within the system and will be completed over the coming months. For most codes, the providers will not notice a difference. One of the changes is the use of the same diagnosis codes for immunizations for both TOS 1 (acute care) and TOS S (THSteps) V202, effective November 1, 2006 will be used. This is in the Medicaid bulletin 201, Jan-Feb, page 5. This is also the article that includes the info on the flexible pricing for the administration fee based on the vaccine components and the use of the modifier to identify the number of components. Please note that the 2007 TMPPM contains the wrong code. A new banner message and bulletin article is being prepared to alert the customers to the correct information.

that is tax-exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. For more information, contact the Robert Wood Foundation, P. O. Box 2316, College Road East, Route 1, Princeton, New Jersey 08543, by phone at 888-631-9989, or visit their web site at <http://www.rwjf.org/applications/solicit-ed/cfp.jsp?ID=19480&c=EMC-FA144>.

## 2007 Federal Poverty Guidelines

*Federal poverty guidelines updated recently*

Section 673(2) of the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (OBRA) of 1981 (42 U.S.C. 9902(2)) requires the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services to update, at least annually, the poverty guidelines that are to be used as eligibility criterion for the Community Services Block Grant program. The poverty guidelines also are used as an eligibility criterion by a number of other Federal programs. The guidelines, provided in a 2007 notification at [http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/fic/AL18-1-5.SHTM - A](http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/fic/AL18-1-5.SHTM-A), represent annual income and reflect the 3.2 percent price increase between calendar years 2005 and 2006.

## Medicaid and CHIP News

*Check out what's new in Medicaid and CHIP*

The Medical Home Brochure included in the THSteps Overview for Managed Care Organizations presented on August 19, 2006, is available *only* as a PDF document in [English](#) and [Spanish](#) from the [DSHS CSHCN Services Program Medical Home web page](#). CSHCN will provide small quantities (up to 200 or 250) of the brochure in English and Spanish upon request. Contact [Beverly MacCarty](#) at (512) 458-7111 ext. 6436 to request hardcopies of the brochure.

**Medicaid and CHIP Statistics –** Medicaid and CHIP statistics for the

Texas Health and Human Services Commission has recently been updated and is now available at <http://www.hhsc.state.tx.us/research/MedicaidEnrollment.html>. The final and "point in time" count reports for Medicaid enrollments have recently been posted. Statistics are available by county and by month.

***The Texas Medicaid in Perspective –***

The newest edition of the *Texas Medicaid in Perspective* (commonly referred to as the *Pink Book*) has been posted to the HHSC Web site at <http://www.hhsc.state.tx.us/medicaid/reports/PB6/PinkBookTOC.html>. This reference book includes an extensive overview of the Texas Medicaid program and statistics. and CHIP.

**Medicaid Reform -** HHSC initiated a Medicaid Reform Project to assess the potential for changing the state's system to improve healthcare services for the state's almost 3 million Medicaid clients and all Texans. Through the project, HHSC will lead an interagency analysis of reform options and identify considerations for Texas in preparation for the 80th Texas Legislature. Reform options will be identified from national and state sources and will include options made possible under the Deficit Reduction Act and through federal waiver negotiations and agreements. HHSC also will keep stakeholders and advocacy organizations informed of the project's work through a web site at <http://www.hhs.state.tx.us/medicaid/ref-orm.shtml>, and will seek feedback on the process through public forums.

**Medicaid Changes for Children in Foster Care –** The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services announced Thursday that Texas will receive a \$4 million grant to help create an electronic medical passport system. This is one part of Medical Services initiative spawned by the passage of Senate Bill 6 in the 79th Texas Legislative Session. The goal of the project is to ensure children in substitute (foster) care receive the medical and behavioral health care services they need in a

timely coordinated manner through a single managed care provider. These services will be available to these children no matter where they are in the state or how often they move. For more information, visit: [http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/About/News/2007/2007-01-26\\_grant.asp](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/About/News/2007/2007-01-26_grant.asp)

## Interesting Web Sites

*Check out these interesting web links*

**Link** to updates now available at **Texas Medicare Rx** website -The website that has helped guide Texas Medicaid clients and others to Medicare Part D prescription drug coverage have been reconditioned for a slightly modified purpose. The new information is now available at [www.texasmedicarerx.org](http://www.texasmedicarerx.org).

**Link** to the **Health Literacy: Help Your Patients Understand Educational Kit** is the AMA Foundation's primary tool for informing physicians, health care professionals and patient advocates about health literacy. Health Service Region 1-Lubbock staff state that the providers in their area love these materials For more information or to order the materials please visit <http://www.ama-assn.org/ama/pub/category/9913.html>.

**Link** to the **DARS Annual Report** is in a handy calendar format that can be used throughout 2007. And it is a quick reference for an overview of the Divisions for Rehabilitation Services, Early Childhood Intervention Services, Blind Services, and Disability Determination Services. Each division's activities, relevant statistics, and mission statement are featured. The Report also introduces you to some of our consumers and describes how DARS employees have helped enrich their lives. The Report can be printed out as a PDF or a Word document (in English or Spanish). May be viewed at <http://www.dars.state.tx.us/reports/index.shtml>.

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**Link to the The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS)** has posted new information regarding the agency's response to Senate Bill 6 Renewal initiatives. Child Protective Services has revised its Medical Services Initiative web site. The Medical Services initiative is working to improve health care for children in foster care. For more information, visit <http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/About/Renewal/CPS/medical.asp>.

Should you have questions regarding the information presented in this publication, please contact Marty Darnell, Program Specialist, THSteps Branch, at 512/458-7745.

## Farmworkers Study

*Study Regarding Barriers to Participation of Farmworkers in Health Programs*

The Health Care Safety Net Amendments of 2002, Congress mandated the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to establish a National Commission on Farmworkers and Federal Health Coverage. The Commission was charged with studying the barriers to accessing Medicaid and CHIP services experienced by farmworkers and their family members who are eligible for these services. This study was to identify solutions that would have increased access to health care services.

In a November 30, 2005 letter to Secretary Leavitt, the Executive Director of Community Health Centers noted that the report (due on October 2003) was never provided to Congress. Subsequently, the report was completed in 2006 and may be viewed at [http://www.fachc.org/mig\\_farmworker%20study%202006.pdf](http://www.fachc.org/mig_farmworker%20study%202006.pdf).

## Interesting Note

The Spanish translation of the THSteps "Clients" web page is complete and may be viewed at [http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/thsteps/clients\\_spn.shtm](http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/thsteps/clients_spn.shtm).



