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## Newborn Screening Panel Expanded

*View the most up-to-date expansion information*

Provider interest in the expansion of the newborn screening (NBS) panel is increasing. Should THSteps regional staff receive questions on this topic, the most up-to-date information is available on the Department of State Health Services [NBS web site](#).

When the NBS web page opens, to view the NBS panel expansion information, select one of the two the links located on the left hand navigation bar. One link, entitled, "[Expansion Information for Parents](#)," contains resources for parents; the other, entitled, "[Expansion Information for Professionals](#)," contains resources for health professionals. The link to the information for professionals will be of particular interest as it contains resources that can be distributed along with THSteps provider relations materials.

Be sure to check this web site regularly for updated information, particularly for updated "Frequently-Asked-Questions" documents. Note also the announcement and link to the Newborn Screening web site on the THSteps "[What's New](#)" [web page](#).

## Upcoming Events

### Regional Monthly Conference Call

The next regional monthly conference call is scheduled for December 7, 2006 at 10:00 a.m. CST. Please contact [Marty Darnell](#) by December 1, 2006, to submit agenda items or questions for discussion.

### THSteps Regional Provider Relations Staff Meeting

The THSteps Regional Providers Relation Staff meeting is will be held January 25, and 26, 2007 (Thursday and Friday) in Austin. The agenda and presenters are being finalized.

### Region 9/10 Medicaid Provider Responsibilities Workshop

Workshop to be held in conjunction with the HHSC Medicaid Fraud Unit on the following dates:

December 1, 2006 – San Angelo  
December 8, 2006 – Odessa

For questions or to register for the Region 9/10 THSteps experts forums, contact [Donna Pena](#), THSteps Team Lead, at (915) 834-7733.

### National Influenza Week

November 27 through December 3, 2006, is National Influenza Week. This event is designed to raise awareness of the importance of influenza vaccinations, as well as to foster increased use of influenza vaccine throughout the months of November, December, and beyond.

CDC recommends to avoid influenza people should take this opportunity to be vaccinated. Please encourage providers to use this time to (1) enhance influenza vaccine availability by scheduling additional clinics and extending clinic hours when feasible, and (2) let patients know about their plans for vaccination opportunities during the coming weeks.

## Medicaid/CHIP Dual Strategy

*TMHP providing dual strategy for claims submission*

To prepare for compliance with the federal requirements mandated by HIPAA, the Texas Medicaid Healthcare Partnership (TMHP) implemented a

transition strategy that allows Medicaid, Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP), Children with Special Health Care Needs (CSHCN), and Long Term Care (LTC) providers to submit standard electronic transactions that contain their National Provider Identifier (NPI) and their legacy provider numbers (e.g., Contract number, Texas Provider Identifier [TPI], universal provider identifier number [UPIN], tax identification number [TIN]). **However, please note and alert providers that if they choose to use the dual strategy, their claims will not be processed without the TPI, even if the NPI is included.**

TMHP is monitoring claim submissions containing NPI numbers. To date, the volume of providers submitting claims using the dual strategy has been extremely low with only 365 acute care providers and 754 LTC providers using the dual strategy. Although use of the dual strategy is voluntary, ***TMHP encourages all providers to submit claims electronically using their NPI.*** When providers submit claims electronically using their NPI number, HHSC can collect data from these claims and the transition to the strict use of NPI numbers will be smoother. If providers have any questions about how to use their NPI numbers or to submit claims electronically, please refer them to the May 2006 NPI Special Medicaid Bulletin for details, or they may contact Liz Sheehan at TMHP at 512-506-7877.

## TIERS Rollout Update

*TIERS Rollout continues in Williamson County*

HHSC recently decided to proceed with the TIERS rollout for Texas Works Programs in Williamson County (Health Service Region 7) with the release of version 58.1.0. Approximately 9,000 active cases in two Texas Works Williamson County offices will be converted from SAVERR to TIERS after the processing cutoff deadline the weekend of December 2, 2006.

December 2006 monthly benefits for those cases will be issued from SAVERR. About 108,000 inactive clients also will be converted. Beginning November 20, 2006, all applications and case activity for the Williamson County Texas Works Programs will be handled through TIERS.

## Raising Texas Plan

*Federal approval boosts “Raising Texas” plan*

HHSC’s plan for improving services to the youngest children in Texas has received approval from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services’ Maternal and Child Health Bureau. The state’s plan, called “Raising Texas,” is a collaborative effort of government agencies, families, community organizations and other stakeholders. The goal of “Raising Texas” is to coordinate and strengthen Texas’ system of services so that all children in Texas enter school healthy

and ready to learn.

To read the article in its entirety, visit HHSC online newsletter, [In Touch](#).

## HHSC Reports to the 79<sup>th</sup> Legislature

*Texas Information and Referral Network (2-1-1) Report presented*

On November 14, 2006, HHSC presented to the Senate Committee on Health and Human Services regarding the Texas Information and Referral Network (TIRN). HHSC explained that TIRN is 24-hour, 7-day referral network that:

- Provides callers with information about community resources, as well as state and federal services, and
- Serves as part of the Homeland Security strategy and provides disaster and emergency management support.

## Questions and Answers

**Question:** THSteps Child Health Records- Question from Provider by way of Region 6/5South-- A Request for some changes a provider would like to see to the Child Health History forms #TDH-ECH-1 thru 7 and the adolescent forms for THSteps to improve the functionality. Can the requested changes be incorporated?

**Answer:** These forms will be reviewed in the near future and THSteps will address/consider the requested changes at that time. The records are joint project with Title V and THSteps so we will need to discuss the proposed changes with that group. Currently there is no specific timetable for the review. We will keep their recommendations in a file to be addressed at the time of review for those forms. Please share the ideas or suggestions that you are receiving from the field.

**Question:** Providers haven't been able to get laboratory mailing containers. Lab staff said they are all out and cannot get them from the manufacturer right now. Lab is asking other Medicaid providers to send their "extras" back to the lab so they can distribute them accordingly. Has the Lab notified THSteps as to when they expect to get more mailing containers?

**Answer:** Per Eldridge Hutcheson, the Laboratory received the supply shipment on November 17 of mailers and have a sufficient supply at this time. Please remember that the lab staff recycles the daily mailing containers received amount and that amount varies day-to-day. They try to honor requests for everyone to have enough for 2 months, based on their order history. They sometimes have only enough to send for one week's needs. They do request that providers order the next week if they need to. Please tell your providers to contact the lab via faxed request (512) 458-7672 or phone request (512) 458-7661 to order what they need for the next month or 2 months. They may also access the website at: [http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/lab/MRS\\_forms.shtm-supplies](http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/lab/MRS_forms.shtm-supplies).

To view the presentation in its entirety, visit the [HHSC News and Events web page](#).

sneezing and coughing into our sleeves.

# HHSC Reports

*Check out these informative reports recently posted to the HHSC web site*

- [2005 Preferred Drug List Annual Report](#)
- [Rider 40: Update on the State Auditor's Office 2003 Audit of the Prescription Drug Program](#)
- [Recommendations for Improving Services for Children with Disabilities in Texas](#)
- [Nov./Dec. Edition of In Touch, HHSC's Stakeholder Newsletter](#)

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

# Interesting Web Sightings

*Check out these informative web pages*

New links have been added to the THSteps "Links" web page to the [Texas Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention](#) and the [Newborn Screening](#) Programs.

[Journey to Wellness](#) – Journey to Wellness is a subsidiary of BioTechnical Communications, Inc. (BTC). BTC, a communications company established in 1987, specializes in the production and dissemination of health care information targeted to ethnic minorities. BTC's business mission combines the interests of consumers and corporate sponsors:

- To provide health care information that engages minority consumers and influences health behaviors.
- To provide companies with a direct link to minority consumers for the purpose of disseminating health information and marketing health-related products or services.

[Why Don't We Do It In Our Sleeves?](#) A web site that promotes infection control by

