

CONNECTIONS



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What's New?

Eat Smart, Be Active Web Site

Check out the new link on the Texas Health Steps (THSteps) web site to the new "[Eat Smart.Be Active](#)" web site. The "Eat Smart Be Active" web site contains a clearinghouse for Texas communities of tools, resources, and evidence-based approaches to promote healthy eating and physical activity. It is an initiative of the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) and the following associated statewide partnerships:

- [Texas Activity and Nutrition Coalition](#)
- [Texas Fruit and Vegetable Network](#)
- [Texas Active Living Network](#)

DSHS will be updating the "Eat Smart. Be Active" web site regularly, so check back from time to time for new information.

Upcoming Events

TNA Training

THSteps Region 9/10 is planning to host a Texas Nurses Association (TNA) *THSteps Pediatric Assessment Training* in October 2006. Additional information may be obtained by contacting [Donna Pena](#), THSteps Team Lead, at (915) 834-7733. For more information about enrolling in this class, the continuing education credit that can be earned, etc., visit the [TNA web site](#) in September or October 2006.

Regional Monthly Conference Call

The next regional monthly conference call is scheduled for September 7, 2006 at 10:00 a.m. CST. Please submit agenda items to [Raymond Andrews](#),

Program Specialist, THSteps Central Office, by the 5:00 p.m., August 25, 2006.

Transforming Medicaid

CMS plans to increase quality and lower costs of Medicaid

CMS will be funding state plans for transforming Medicaid to increase quality and lower costs by distributing \$150 million in "transformation grants" over 2007 and 2008. States will research and design ways to transform their Medicaid systems to increase the quality and efficiency of care.

Funds for the Medicaid "transformation grants" were authorized by the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 and are aimed at state adoption of innovative systems to get more value out of the money they spend providing healthcare to their citizens who are low-income elderly, and children and people with disabilities.

For more details, see the [CMS Medicaid News Release dated July 26, 2006](#).

What's New in WIC

Check out the July/August WIC News

The *Texas WIC News* is published every other month by the DSHS. Check out the [July/August 2006 issue](#) for interesting news about breastfeeding, new products available to WIC participants, and more.

Subscriptions are free. Issues can be viewed in pdf format on the WIC web site. You also may request a



subscription or copies of back issues by e-mailing the [WIC News subscriptions](#).

New THSteps Intranet Web Site

THSteps Intranet web site coming soon

Currently, Kathy Reeves, the THSteps Web Developer, is designing an intranet web site where you will be able to view items of interest to THSteps and HHSC Enterprise staff. Issues of the *Texas Health Steps Connections Newsletters*, for example, will be one of the items posted on this site. One of the goals of this web site will be to provide ready access to pertinent information for the THSteps regions and partner agencies. This site also will serve as a distribution point for documents that need review and comment. The hope is this will alleviate e-mail account overages.

To make this intranet web site as user-friendly as possible, THSteps Central Office would like to hear from Regional Team Leads about other topics, ideas, etc., that they would find helpful and interesting. Please e-mail your suggestions to [Raymond Andrews](#),

Program Specialist, THSteps.

2006 CHIP Data Now Available

HHSC releases August and July 2006 CHIP data

HHSC recently posted the following two CHIP reports on their web site.

- [CHIP Enrollment by Income Group as of July 2006](#)
- [CHIP Enrollment, Renewal and Disenrollment Rates \(August 2006\)](#)

Regions Plan for THSteps Experts Forums

Region 9/10 Forums

For details concerning future Region 9/10 Experts Forums, contact [Donna Pena](#), THSteps Regional Team Lead. In addition to the Experts Forums, THSteps Region 9/10 is planning a vision and hearing workshop for October 2-6, 2006 in Midland, Texas, as well as a Comprehensive Pediatric

Assessment training session scheduled for October 2006 (time and place to be determined). For more information on the forums and trainings, please contact Donna Pena at (915) 834-7733.

Smoke-Free Ordinance Database Now Available

DSHS Database Provides Texas Information about Smoke-Free Ordinances

The release of a recent U.S. Surgeon General's report concluding that there is no risk-free level of exposure to secondhand smoke has spurred a continuing increase in questions about smoking ordinances across Texas. The report concludes that secondhand smoke causes lung cancer, heart disease, sudden infant death syndrome, low birth weight, asthma, bronchitis, and other serious illnesses and is responsible for tens of thousands of deaths each year in the United States.

On July 26, 2006, DSHS announced the availability of an online database containing information about smoking ordinances in Texas communities. The online database was developed by the University of Houston and funded by the DSHS. The Texas database, available at <http://txshsord.coe.uh.edu/>, contains the text of ordinances and can be used to compare policies, provide summaries, and compile customized reports.

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

Questions and Answers

Question: Does THSteps cover my son's physical needed to play high school basketball?

Answer: No, THSteps does not cover physicals for participation in sports activities. If the child is due for a regular THSteps medical check-up at the time the parent requests the sports physical, the provider should do a complete medical check-up, then provide the parent/caregiver with the necessary documentation. If the child is not due for a medical check-up, the request for a sport physical does not meet the requirements for an exception to periodicity.

Question: How is a parent's refusal of one or more components of the THSteps medical checkup handled?

Answer: When a parent refuses a specific component or components, the provider should document the refusal in the medical record. The provider should provide education/guidance as to the importance of a complete THSteps checkup, the purpose of the procedure, and the potential risks of refusing and document this in the medical record.

