

CONNECTIONS



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Look Who's Retiring!

Raymond Andrews to retire

After two years of service as a Program Specialist I in THSteps and over 25 years for the State of Texas, Raymond Andrews will be retiring effective Friday, September 29, 2006. Please join us in wishing Raymond the best in his retirement!

Upcoming Events

Regional Monthly Conference Call

The next regional monthly conference call is scheduled for October 5, 2006 at 10:00 a.m. CST. Please submit agenda items to [Marty Darnell](#), Program Specialist, THSteps Central Office, by the 5:00 p.m., September 26, 2006.

Upcoming Texas Nurses Association Training Event

The Texas Nurses Association (TNA) will be conducting the "Pediatric Assessment Training" in El Paso, Texas, at the Texas State Building, on October 12, 13, and 14, 2006. For detailed information about enrolling for this class, visit the [TNA web site](#).

Upcoming THSteps Experts Forums

Region 1 THSteps Expert Forums

For questions or to register for the following events, contact [Tricia Vowels](#), THSteps Team Lead, at (806) 767-0414.

- THSteps Experts Forum for ECI (Early Childhood Intervention) staff on October 2, 2006, at the Lubbock Independent School District.
- Perinatal Experts Forum on October 27, 2006, at the Texas Tech University Health Science Center in

Lubbock. (Funded by a grant from the March of Dimes).

- Medicaid Provider Workshop on November 3, 2006, in Lubbock.
- Lubbock Foster Parent Workshop on November 4, 2006. (Location to be announced at a later date).

Region 9/10 THSteps Expert Forums

For questions or to register for the Region 9/10 THSteps experts forums, contact [Donna Pena](#), THSteps Team Lead, at (915) 834-7733. Planning continues for a Vision/Hearing Workshop to be held in Midland on October 2 – 6, 2006, and a Comprehensive Pediatric Assessment training in El Paso, Texas, on October 12, 13, and 14, 2006.

HHSC *In Touch* Issue Now Available

September/October 2006 Issue of In Touch Available

[In Touch](#) provides news and information from the Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC). This newest issue contains information on:

- New guidelines reduce use of psychotropic drugs
- Workers with disabilities now can buy Medicaid benefits
- Stakeholders to help select next DSHS commissioner
- New digs for DFPS intake workers; mission remains the same

Texas' Immunization Rates Increase

Texas Increases Key Immunization Rate 11% in CDC National Survey



The immunization rate for Texas children increased 11 percent in 2005, moving the state up in the national rankings to No. 24, according to statistics released today by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The CDC's National Immunization Survey, which tracks immunization rates among preschool children, found that the Texas rate for a key vaccine series was 76.8 percent in 2005. That's an 11 percent increase over the state's 2004 rate of 69.3 percent, and it's the first time since the survey's inception in 1995 that Texas ranked above the national average. For more information, see the [DSHS Immunization Branch news release](#).

Medicaid ID Stuffer Information

Check out this DADS web site for Med ID stuffer announcements

The Department of Assistive and Disability Services (DADS) provides announcements referred to as [Information Letters \(I-Letters\)](#). The I-Letters provide information regarding upcoming Med ID stuffers. By checking these out each month, you can get a "heads-up" on information Medicaid clients will be receiving shortly. For example, the October 2006 Med ID stuffer is announcing the expansion of Medicaid services to people with disabilities and the elderly.

TMHP Provides Workshops on NPI

National Provider Identifier (NPI) Workshops Scheduled for November 2006

The Texas Medicaid and Healthcare Partnership (TMHP) is conducting free workshops throughout Texas in November. Provider representatives will be available at the workshops to answer questions about the use of the new NPI numbers and how its use will affect providers and claims billing.

TMHP will mail invitations to providers. A list of specific dates, times, locations, seat availability, and information on registration is available on the [TMHP website](#). For assistance with the workshop registration process, or for more information, please let providers know to call the TMHP Contact Center at 1-800-925-9126 or the TMHP-CSHCN Contact Center at 1-800-568-2413.

Racial Disparities Closing

Racial disparities in Childhood Immunization Coverage Rates Closing

In a recent press release, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) announced that 2005 childhood immunization rates for vaccines routinely recommended for children between 19 and 35 months of age remain at or near record highs. For the first time in the past ten years, rates for the full series of recommended vaccines did not vary significantly by race and ethnicity. CDC attributes this reduction in the immunization disparity gap to the federal Vaccines for Children (VFC) Program. For more information, see the

full [CDC press release](#).

New Issue of WIC News Available

Check out the [September/October 2006 Texas WIC News newsletter](#). The WIC News contains several articles that may be of particular interest to THSteppers:

- How to Read an Immunization Record
- Type 2 Diabetes Rising at Alarming Rates in Texas
- Strategic Plan for the Prevention of Obesity in Texas 2005-2010

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: Should Texas Health Step's clients receive a second Hemoglobin type test if we don't have a copy of the second testing on the record? If we perform this test on a teenager (due to lack of documentation of the 2nd test) will we be reimbursed from the state lab since the state is requiring this test?

Answer: The infant is required to have 2 Newborn Screening (NBS) tests. Current policy states that if there is doubt that the infant has had a NBS test, the provider should complete a test in the first year of life. The requirement for a hemoglobin type test is met if the child has had a NBS test and the results are available. You may contact the DSHS lab for results also. If test results are unavailable for a teenager receiving a THSteps medical check-up, then the provider should submit a specimen to the DSHS laboratory as with any other lab test for processing. The lab will process the specimen and return the results to the provider but there is no reimbursement to the provider. Note: the client must be eligible for Medicaid at the time of the visit.

