



Interagency Council for Genetic Services

Texas Department of State Health Services * Genetic Services Contractors
Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services * Texas Department of Insurance
University of Texas Health Science Centers * Consumer and Public Representatives

Meeting Minutes August 26, 2005

Members Present:

Margaret Drummond-Borg, M.D., DSHS, Chair
Lillian Lockhart, M.D., UTMB
Mary Kukulich, M.D., Provider Representative
Janet Shephard, L.M.S.W., Consumer Representative

Absent:

Charles Reyna, TDI
Alicia Essary, DADS
Bob Cleveland, Consumer Rep.

Staff:

Elaine Braslow, DSHS
Michele Goddard, DSHS

The minutes of the June 3, 2005 meeting were reviewed and approved as written.

It was recommended that a letter be sent to the Commissioner of the Texas Department of Insurance (TDI) regarding a representative from that agency. Charles Reyna has only been present at one meeting since being appointed.

AGENCY REPORTS

❖ **DSHS - Margaret Drummond-Borg**

DSHS is still working through the consolidation and optimization process. All human resources functions have been outsourced and employees will now have to perform HR actions online through a system called "accessHR". The agency is closing a number of satellite offices and moving them to more central areas. A no-smoking ban has been introduced for the entire grounds of the agency. DSHS has experienced computer crashes that lasted a couple of days due to a virus and a worm.

❖ **DADS – Alicia Essary**

No report.

❖ **TDI – Charles Reyna**

No report.

❖ **UTMB – Lillian Lockhart**

No report, except UTMB also had computer crashes, which disturbed clinic.

NEWBORN SCREENING PROGRAM REVIEW – Margaret Drummond-Borg

The final report from the NBS Program Review is expected to be completed by the end of August. The survey, discussed and reviewed at the June 3rd council meeting, was sent to roughly 4,000 people involved in newborn screening. Four hundred (400) people responded, many of whom were physicians. Results of the surveys received have been compiled and a copy provided to council members in their meeting packet. There were more positive responses than negative but DSHS is looking more in depth now to see what the negative responses involved. One question on the survey asked if they would like a courier service, they said yes but it was not worth the extra cost.

A final report will be written regarding the review/survey, and council members will receive a copy.

79TH LEGISLATIVE SESSION – Margaret Drummond-Borg

House Bill 790, passed during the 79th legislative session, states that “DSHS shall conduct a study to determine the most cost effective method of conducting newborn screening.” DSHS is to obtain proposals regarding the conduct of newborn screening and compare the costs to outsource newborn screening to a qualified laboratory. This all needs to be done by March 2006. The DSHS Health Screening Branch is in the process of writing an RFP to be issued in November 2005. The RFP is asking interested outside contractors to essentially bid to outsource the NBS Program. This will enable DSHS to compare the costs of outsourcing NBS functions, including lab work, to in-house costs. There will be a meeting for interested parties on September 21st to review the legislation and RFP procedures and to get input. People are being asked to register for this because there will be limited space. It will be held at the JJ Pickle Center in Austin. In October, there will be a meeting of the people who are interested in the RFP.

The whole process will be in phases, not all at once. There were concerns raised during the session about the most effective way to do it, the tests that should be done and whether to do a 1st and 2nd screen. If we are going to expand and do all of the disorders, then we need to continue with the 1st and 2nd screens. If you only screen for the disorders detectable on the 1st screen, then perhaps you can get away with one screen. Early discharge has always been a concern. If a baby needs to be re-screened in 3 days and the baby is only at the hospital for one day, it is very difficult to get them back in for the 2nd screen.

Dr. Drummond-Borg referred members to two handouts in the meeting packet – SB 316 and a draft of the resource booklet regarding Shaken Baby Syndrome, NBS, and other information called for in the legislation. Per SB 316, the resource booklet needs to be posted on the DSHS website by September 1st. A booklet will be printed sometime in the future. The physician that delivers the baby will give the booklet to the family. There was discussion about having it in Spanish and also Vietnamese.

MEDICAID – Margaret Drummond-Borg

Medicaid has been looking at the reimbursement schedules for Genetics. With the HIPAA remediation changing from the local codes to using regular Medicaid codes, this means that we have a different rate for the same Medicaid codes for geneticists as we do for the regular physicians. To change the frequency and to add in more codes has been difficult because of the feeling that we should keep the same periodicity for the Medicaid genetics codes. We hope to get more codes added that will allow the geneticists to be paid for visits that are outside the 6 months.

It seems that Medicaid is paying most physicians much less than they should to enable a child to be seen. About 37% of the newborn screens are paid for by private insurance, about 50% by Medicaid, and the rest are not covered by either Medicaid or private insurance.

In the hospital, Medicaid reimburses according to face-to-face time, which includes bedside and on the floor. In the office they refer to face-to-face time with the physician, not the time spent with the genetic counselor or how much time spent with the nurse, etc.

Discussion followed regarding which tests Medicaid covers/will cover.

There is a need for more geneticists in Texas. This will be even more important when more metabolic studies are introduced.

OTHER BUSINESS

Dr. Lockhart announced that Dr. Matalon could cover more patients in his clinic at UTMB.

Dr. Drummond-Borg will continue to work with Medicaid to see if we can get better reimbursement.

Janet Shephard announced that there is a new public affairs director for the March of Dimes (MOD), Morgan Walthall.

The next meeting date is December 2, 2005.

There being no further immediate business, the meeting adjourned at 12:30 pm.