

EPSDT and Title V Collaboration to Improve Child Health

MOUs to Improve Linkages between Medicaid Managed Care Organizations and Public Health Agencies Serving Children

Managed care structures affect how public health agencies carry out their community-wide public health responsibilities. Certain states now require that managed care organizations (MCOs) contracting with Medicaid establish Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with local public health agencies to address some of these issues.

State Title V MCH programs can and should help local public health agencies learn about managed care and the MOU process. In terms of EPSDT, MOUs might define interaction related to case management, data reporting, immunization billing, children with special health care needs, and so forth.

Studies by the GWU-Center for Health Services Research and Policy indicate that:

- MOUs play a useful role in establishing working relationships between public health agencies and MCOs.
- MOUs often do not address core public health functions beyond the provision of personal health services.
- While MOUs often describe billing arrangements for covered services delivered by a local health department, such arrangements are often not in use.

MOUs have a limited impact on resolution of certain fundamental issues and do not typically improve:

- State and local public health agencies' access to data needed for community-wide disease surveillance (e.g. immunization registries).
- MCO participation in larger community efforts to control public health threats (e.g., communicable disease outbreaks, lead exposure).
- MCO understanding of quality improvement standards advocated by public health agencies as a means of community-wide public health protection.