

THE NATIONAL ALLIANCE NEWS



THE NATIONAL ALLIANCE
TO ADVANCE ADOLESCENT HEALTH

Issue 1: October 2011

In This Issue

New Report: *State EPSDT Policies for Adolescent Preventive Care*

Defining the Essential Health Benefits: IOM Report and NAIC Glossary

Health Care Reform and Adolescents: Ensuring Implementation Works for Adolescents

The 'Super-Committee' and Potential Medicaid Cuts

Featured Model Teen Program: The Adolescent Center at Group Health Cooperative, Seattle, WA

New Staff Members Join The National Alliance!

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Our monthly e-newsletter, *The National Alliance News*, is designed to keep you up-to-date about the latest happenings at The National Alliance to Advance Adolescent Health and related areas of interest within the adolescent health care community.

New Report: *State EPSDT Policies for Adolescent Preventive Care*

The National Alliance recently published a new Fact Sheet on adolescent health services. *State EPSDT Policies for Adolescent Preventive Care* is an analysis of state policies regarding preventive services provided under the EPSDT mandate for Medicaid beneficiaries aged 12-21. Although federal law requires states to offer adolescent patients a comprehensive preventive office visit, it gives little guidance as to what that visit must entail. States, therefore, have evolved their own policies to implement the EPSDT mandate and provide guidance to practitioners. This report looks at the considerable variation in policies and implementation among the states. Read the [full report](#), available on our website.



Defining the Essential Health Benefits: IOM Report and NAIC Glossary

The Affordable Care Act stipulates that all health insurance plans must contain a standard core set of benefits, known as the Essential Health Benefits (EHB). The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) enlisted the help of the Institute of Medicine (IOM) to discuss how to define the EHB. The IOM in return formed the Committee on Defining and Revising an Essential Health Benefits Package for Qualified Health Plans and held two workshops in which experts from the federal and state government, employers, insurers, health care providers, consumers, and health care researchers discussed potential definitions of the EHB. The IOM published a report on August 29, 2011, *Perspectives on Essential Health Benefits*, that summarizes the presentations from the workshops. The [full report](#), which presents testimony but does not make any official recommendations, is available on the IOM website. The IOM will release a consensus report in the future that will provide final conclusions and recommendations for the definition of the EHB.



In addition to seeking help from the IOM, HHS sought input from the National Association of Insurance Commissioners (NAIC) to define the standards of benefits. The Consumer Information Subgroup - with officials from state insurance health plans, Medical organizations, and consumer groups - devised a consumer-friendly glossary that defines terms consumers will need to understand when purchasing insurance. The glossary does not define many health services, such as mental health or preventive care, but it does include a definition of medical necessity that seems promising. The glossary was recently referenced in the *Federal Register*, Vol. 76, No. 162, issued on Monday, August 22, 2011. Check out the [glossary](#), which, once finalized, will be made available to consumers by all insurance companies as stipulated by the Affordable Care Act.



The National Alliance will continue to monitor these developments and produce comments as appropriate to ensure that adolescent health issues are taken into account as health reform implementation proceeds.

Health Care Reform and Adolescents: Ensuring Implementation Works for Adolescents

The National Alliance and partner organizations recently submitted two sets of comments on proposed regulations issued by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to implement components of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

- Our [first set of comments](#) addressed a provision that could have compromised confidentiality for adolescent patients receiving sensitive services such as STD testing or behavioral health counseling.
- Our [second set of comments](#) focused on strengthening the proposed mechanisms for maintaining accountability among states to ensure equal access to care.

Read both sets of comments on the [Policy Communications](#) section of our website.

The 'Super Committee' and Potential Medicaid Cuts

Medicaid faces potential cuts from the Congressional debt-reduction 'Super Committee', a group of six Democrats and six Republicans tasked with saving \$1.5 trillion from the US budget by November 23. These changes could leave many low-income adolescents without insurance and could reduce benefits for those who remain eligible.



We created a [fact sheet](#) that explains the critical role that Medicaid plays in ensuring adolescents' access to comprehensive health care.

This Month's Featured Model Teen Program: The Adolescent Center at Group Health Cooperative

Located in Seattle, Washington, The Adolescent Center at Group Health Cooperative is devoted to providing confidential and holistic care to adolescent patients. The interdisciplinary staff at The Adolescent Center includes an adolescent medicine physician, a child and adolescent psychiatrist, a child and adolescent psychologist, pediatric and psychiatric nurse practitioners, and masters level therapists. The staff members treat adolescents with complex risk behaviors and conditions requiring more specialized primary care and provide consultation services to primary care practices. The Adolescent Center has developed outreach activities that include routinely sending out a health education pamphlet called Totally Teen to all teens in the Group Health Cooperative with information on different teen health issues. Visit The National Alliance's website for [more information](#) about this month's Model Teen Program.



New Staff Members Join The National Alliance!

The National Alliance is pleased to welcome three new staff members:

- Corinne Dreskin, Executive Assistant
- Lauren Pollack, Research Assistant
- Cara Sprague, Research Assistant

Check out their bios on the [About Us](#) section of our website!