

2007 Fact Sheet:

July takes big step in health care

THE BACKGROUND

When Governor Gregoire took office, she set a major health goal – health insurance coverage for all Washington kids by 2010.

This year's Legislature took a major step toward reaching that goal, authorizing eligibility changes in the next biennium that will allow more children in more families to sign up for effective health-care coverage. Over the next year, we anticipate that about half – 38,500 -- of the estimated 73,000 remaining uninsured children will become enrolled for coverage under the new standards.

The first key date is July 22, the day that the Children's Health Care Act of 2007 goes into effect. On that day, all children in families with incomes up to 250 percent of Federal Poverty Level (FPL) will be eligible for Medicaid-equivalent health-care coverage.

That is also the day that, philosophically, state medical assistance will have a new look and feel – instead of sorting children's eligibility by different program standards, "kids will be kids" in terms of the coverage they are entitled to....and receive.

To prepare for July 22, DSHS Community Services Offices (CSOs) around the state began saving ineligible medical applications turned in during June so they could be re-evaluated in July once the higher eligibility standards apply. In addition, DSHS will work within the Automated Client Eligibility System (ACES) in July to identify any family units with children who now may be eligible for medical coverage. Once identified, DSHS will be able to add these children to medical assistance rolls automatically, without requiring any new paperwork or delay. An added benefit to this move is that families united on the same health coverage will be much more likely to find an effective "medical home" – a single provider or clinic that will be familiar with the entire family's health care needs and concerns.

Finally, DSHS will be working in July with statewide stakeholders and health-care sector professionals who can help spread the word about the state's increased eligibility limits and help locate uninsured children who can qualify under the new standards. These groups include the Children's Alliance, Community Health Network of Washington, Washington State Hospital Association, and the Washington Association of Community and Migrant Health Centers.