

September 29, 2009
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Jeff Stensland
(803) 898-2584

Back to School

Summer is quickly becoming a memory and back to school is here. But preparations for the school year include more than new clothes, book bags and shoes. Physicals and immunizations are also important for starting the new school year right.

Dr. Theresa Buschor of Sumter Pediatrics says this is a busy time of year for all pediatric practices. "Children are due for vaccinations that their parents may not even know about," she said. "Boosters, especially chicken pox are very important and we're also pushing parents to bring their children in for well visits."

Sumter Pediatrics participates in the Healthy Connections Choices program and is a practice with 50 percent Medicaid patients. Healthy Connections Choices is part of the state's overall Medicaid reform plan and is designed to get a better return on South Carolina's health care investment. Through partnerships with managed care organizations, medical homes networks and special enrollment counselors, the SC Department of Health and Human Services (SCDHHS) seeks to increase care coordination and disease prevention methods not found in traditional Fee-for-Service Medicaid. Those who choose to enroll in a health plan will be able to establish crucial relationships with a primary care doctor.

"What we are finding with our managed care companies is that they are calling patients reminding them of doctor visits," Buschor said. "Some offer incentives for well visits such as a gift card. Whatever gets them to come in for their visit is a good thing."

One example is a special incentive program for asthmatic patients that helps keep them out of the emergency rooms. "Our patients have had to adjust to a different way of business with their health care," Buschor said. "They are used to accessing the emergency room for health care instead of having the doctor and insurance companies work as a team for their children's health care."

A SCDHHS shared eligibility worker has been very helpful enrolling children in the health plans that Sumter Pediatrics takes, Buschor said. "They pay one half of the salary but it has been well worth the investment."

"We (Sumter Pediatrics) were proactive from the beginning of the Healthy Connections Choices program to help get patients enrolled in the plans this practice took to avoid disruption of health care for the children."

"We chose our health plans for the availability of certain drugs for children," Buschor said. "Our relationship has been very good with the plans and they have expanded their drugs for the best interest of the child."

For more information on SC Healthy Connections Choices call free 1-877-552-4642 or visit the website at www.SCchoices.com.