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Coordinated Care a Popular Choice for South Carolina's Medicaid Population

COLUMBIA, S.C.--Medicaid beneficiaries in South Carolina are choosing to participate in coordinated care plans at increasing rates, with now nearly 60 percent of eligible beneficiaries enrolled in a plan.

Enhanced care coordination and improved health outcomes are the central features of the *South Carolina Healthy Connections Choices* program, which gives Medicaid beneficiaries the option of joining one of several private health plans offered in their counties. Through *Healthy Connections Choices*, beneficiaries can choose either a Medical Homes Network (MHN), a Managed Care Organization (MCO), or they can remain in traditional Fee-for-Service Medicaid.

Those enrolled in a health plan receive the same benefits as those in fee-for-service Medicaid, but also extra services and benefits offered through the individual plans. These include special programs for those with specific diseases, baby supplies for new mothers and reward cards for attending regularly scheduled doctor visits.

Healthy Connections Choices was launched in August 2007 and is administered by the South Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (SCDHHS). Currently there are seven Medicaid health plans participating in the program: Absolute Total Care by Total Carolina Care (42 counties), BlueChoice (36 counties), CHC Cares (20 counties), Carolina Crescent (46 counties), First Choice (46 counties), SC Solutions (46 counties) and Unison (42 counties).

Prior to 2007, South Carolina had only three Medicaid health plan options that were not available in all counties. Today at least three plans are available in every county and about 374,000 Medicaid beneficiaries are enrolled in a plan—a 146 percent enrollment increase in less than two years.

“We’re very encouraged that more and more Medicaid members are choosing a health plan and establishing a ‘medical home’,” said Roy Hess, director of SCDHHS’ Division of Care Management. “Increased care coordination will ultimately lead to better long-term health outcomes for those in Medicaid, and that benefits everyone in South Carolina.”

SCDHHS serves about 900,000 low-income, elderly and disabled residents during the course of a year. Its mission is to deliver the best health care value for South Carolinians.

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