

Care Ring Health Policy Update

September 20, 2011

NEWS FROM NORTH CAROLINA

A. *Medicaid Benefit Changes Coming*

As a result of the Medicaid savings required by the NC budget passed by our General Assembly earlier this year, the following changes will soon impact Medicaid recipients. To learn more, see the North Carolina Division of Medical Assistance's September [Medicaid Bulletin](#).

1. Starting October 1, 2011 all routine eye exams and visual aids (including eye glasses) for adult Medicaid recipients 21 years of age and older will no longer be covered.
2. Adults will soon be limited to three therapy visits per year (including outpatient physical therapy, occupational therapy and speech therapy).
3. Dental deep cleanings for both adults and children in Medicaid will be limited to once every two years.

B. *Medical Home Model News*

North Carolina is making [national news](#) for a new public-private partnership that will pilot offering private-sector employees access the "medical home" infrastructure for which our state's Medicaid program has been lauded for many years. Coordination of care through a primary-care medical home, including health information technology infrastructure and case management services, has yielded significant savings for our Medicaid program. This innovative partnership seeks to bring these savings to the private sector. Groups participating in this pilot include GlaxoSmithKline, North Carolina's State Health Plan and Kerr Drug.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES AND HEALTH POLICY NEWS

A. *A Primer on Medicaid and Its Role in State/Federal Budgets*

With federal spending on health care in the news and on the forefront of deficit reduction conversations in Washington, here is a great 4-page primer on the [Medicaid program](#) that explains the basics of what it is, how much it costs and its role in state and federal budgets.

B. *New Census Data on the Uninsured*

The Census Bureau has just released new 2010 data on health insurance and poverty in our country. The Kaiser Family Foundation has updated its [Five Facts about the Uninsured](#) with the new Census figures. Action for Children North Carolina's [analysis](#) of the new data highlights several important trends in access to health insurance for children in our state:

1. Despite continued declines in the percent of children covered by their parents' employer-sponsored coverage (now less than 50%), investment in programs like Medicaid and North Carolina Health Choice has led to a decline in the number of uninsured children in our state.
2. The percent of children uninsured in our state remained statistically unchanged from 2005-2007 to 2008-2010, holding steady due to investment in children's health insurance.
3. Approximately 34% of children in our state are covered by public health insurance programs (2008-2010 data).