



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
December 1, 2006

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Advocates Want to Know: Why Were 3,800 Texas Medicaid Applicants Denied Benefits in First 3 Months of New Federal Policy?

Austin, TX— Since July 2006, the federal government requires that states make U.S. citizens prove their status in order to receive Medicaid. Three months later, Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) data reveal that nearly 3,800 applicants—two-thirds of them children—have been denied Texas Medicaid strictly for lack of citizenship documentation.

These numbers include infants under age 1 as well as pregnant women, despite HHSC procedures that should allow quick enrollment of all babies born in Texas, and special procedures to speed enrollment of pregnant women so they can get early prenatal care.

Despite Texas Medicaid's hard work to minimize the disruption for newborns, according to HHSC 200 infants under age 1 were denied new Medicaid applications in August, September, and October 2006.

"Texas policy makes it clear that any child born in Texas should have no trouble enrolling in Medicaid, and maternity applicants are supposed to get special attention and help, so their babies can be born healthy," said Anne Dunkelberg, Associate Director of the Center for Public Policy Priorities. "If correct policy is not understood, then we need to get the word out. Or, if most of these folks were born in other states, we can and should make sure they get the help they need to get their birth certificates. Everyone loses if eligible Texans are denied Medicaid."

Dunkelberg encourages clients, health care providers, and nonprofits to contact CPPP with problems, comments and questions by e-mailing Dunkelberg@cppp.org. CPPP will work with HHSC to resolve the situation.

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