

## January Policy Update

January 12, 2010

### SBHCs in Health Care Reform

Health care reform continues to dominate political news in the United States. As the process has moved forward, NASBHC and our friends in Congress have worked diligently to keep strong school-based health care provisions in the bill.

NASBHC is focusing on those provisions directly affecting school-based health centers (SBHCs). Our two priorities are:

- the establishment of a federal authorizing program for SBHCs, and
- a mechanism by which SBHCs can be reimbursed for covered services under Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP).

#### ***Where We Are in the Process***

Both the House and Senate have passed their own versions Health Care Reform legislation. Summaries of SBHC provisions in each bill are below.

- The House of Representatives:  
The House bill, *The Affordable Health Care for America Act of 2009* was passed on November 7, 2009. It includes all the SBHC provisions NASBHC and our partners have been promoting: authorization, reimbursement, and cost-based reimbursement. This is a huge victory for SBHCs!
- The Senate:  
The Senate passed its bill *The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act* on December 24, 2009. The bill includes some major victories for SBHCs including authorization language (a federal grant program) and emergency (short-term) appropriations which would provide \$200 million for SBHCs over four years.

#### ***Next Steps: Conference***

- The House and Senate are now involved in an "informal conference" to reconcile their two bills. The House will accept the Senate bill, amend it, vote on it, and send it back to the Senate. The Senate will then vote on the amended bill passed by the House. Congress is still hoping to reach an agreement (if not a final vote) by the State of the Union Address, which will likely be the first week in February.
- The final bill created by the conference committee will have to be passed by both chambers and signed by President Obama.

### ***NASBHC Conference Strategy***

- NASBHC staff and supporters are working hard to get all of our provisions in the final bill. We are mobilizing around two provisions in the House bill, which are not in the Senate bill: language requiring regulations regarding reimbursement under Medicaid and CHIP for SBHCs and the establishment of technical assistance for SBHCs.
  - **SEC. 399Z-1** -“The Secretary shall issue regulations regarding the reimbursement for health services to individuals eligible to receive them through the program under this section, including reimbursement under any insurance policy or any Federal or State health benefits program.”
  - **SEC. 399Z-1** “Technical Assistance- The Secretary shall provide (either directly or by grant or contract) technical and other assistance to SBHCs to assist such SBHCs to meet the requirements of this section. Such assistance may include fiscal and program management assistance, training in fiscal and program management, operational and administrative support, and the provision of information to the SBHCs of the variety of resources available under this title and how those resources can be best used to meet the health needs of the communities served by the SBHCs.”
- NASBHC has created a document that compares the language in the House and Senate bill and highlights the language that NASBHC recommends, based on input from state associations over the last several years. This document was sent to key Hill staffers in early January.

### ***For more information:***

- Full text of House bill: [H.R. 3962](#)
- Full text of Senate bill: [H.R. 3590](#)
- Side-by-Side Comparison of House and Senate bills:  
[http://www.kff.org/healthreform/upload/housesenatebill\\_final.pdf](http://www.kff.org/healthreform/upload/housesenatebill_final.pdf)

As we move through the next few weeks, NASBHC will work to mobilize the SBHC field and bring pressure to bear as necessary to ensure that the strongest possible SBHC provisions are included in the final legislation.