

## November Policy Update

November 10, 2009

### 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***

#### **SBHCs in the House: TIME TO CELEBRATE!**

**Late during the night of Saturday, November 7, the House of Representatives passed *The Affordable Health Care for America Act of 2009*, H.R. 3962, with a vote of 220-215. 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! Congratulations are in order for every SBHC advocate who worked so hard to get to this huge milestone!**

#### **Authorization and Reimbursement:**

##### **Subtitle B, Part 1, Sec. 2511. School-based health clinics.**

Establishes a new program to support school-based health clinics that provide health services to children and adolescents. Authorizes \$50 million for FY 2011 and such sums as may be necessary for each of FY 2012 through FY 2015 to carry out this program. This section also includes a provision on reimbursement under Medicaid and CHIP.

#### **Cost-Based Reimbursement:**

##### **Subtitle C, Sec. 1730B. Coverage of School-based health clinics.**

Requires that State Medicaid programs reimburse school-based health clinics receiving funds under the program established by section 2511 on the same basis as they reimburse federally-qualified health centers (FQHCs).

A manager's amendment was also released on November 3. A manager's amendment is a package of amendments to which the Committee Chairperson (in this case, Rep. Dingell [D-MI], as chair of the House Energy and Commerce Committee) has agreed to and compiled in a package. In addition to the authorization and cost-based reimbursement, the manager's amendment includes SBHCs in a list of entities eligible for grants for mental health screening and brief treatment.

***For more information:***

Text of H.R. 3962: [http://docs.house.gov/rules/health/111\\_ahcaa.pdf](http://docs.house.gov/rules/health/111_ahcaa.pdf)

Side-by-Side Comparison with H.R. 3200: [http://majorityleader.gov/docUploads/SBS\\_FINAL.pdf](http://majorityleader.gov/docUploads/SBS_FINAL.pdf)

Manager's Amendment: [http://docs.house.gov/rules/health/111\\_hr3962\\_dingell.pdf](http://docs.house.gov/rules/health/111_hr3962_dingell.pdf)

Comparison of Children's Provisions: [http://www.firstfocus.net/Download/SidebySide\\_HealthReform.pdf](http://www.firstfocus.net/Download/SidebySide_HealthReform.pdf)

**SBHCs in the Senate**

In the Senate, the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (H.E.L.P.) Committee and the Finance Committee, completed their mark-ups. The two bills were then merged and sent to the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) for scoring. The draft bill has not been released to the public

***What Will Happen Next?***

Senate leadership has refused to guarantee a vote before the end of calendar year 2009. When the CBO completes its analysis, the bill will go to the Senate floor. An extended debate – at least two weeks – is likely, and NASBHC expects numerous substantive amendments about SBHCs to be offered and considered on the floor. Amendments will probably focus on reproductive health. NASBHC has compiled a list of likely amendments and counterarguments and disseminated this information to Senate SBHC proponents. A 60-vote majority will be required for cloture, followed by a simple majority vote to pass the bill.

If both chambers are successful in passing health care reform bills, the next step will be to combine the House and Senate versions into one piece of legislation. To do that, a conference committee will be established, composed of members of each chamber. The final bill created by the conference committee will have to be passed by both chambers and signed by President Obama.

As we move through the next few months, NASBHC will work to mobilize the SBHC field and bring pressure to bear as necessary to keep SBHC provisions in the health care reform bills.

***SBHC Advocates on Capitol Hill!***

**State Association Executive Directors Visit over 60 Hill Offices!**

NASBHC's annual meeting of state association executive directors took place in Washington, DC, on October 21-23, with October 21 set aside as a Hill Day. EDs from across the country met with their Representatives and Senators to discuss SBHCs and to urge support for health care reform. Their visits were met with enthusiastic support for SBHCs.

Thirty-five Members of Congress (or their Legislative Assistants) indicated their support for health care reform was either guaranteed or extremely likely. None directly opposed SBHCs, although five Members explained that

they cannot support the health care reform bill, even though they do support SBHCs. Several others indicated interest in more education. State association EDs and NASBHC staff are following up with Members' offices and providing additional information as requested.

## ***And in Other News...***

### **Education Policy**

As an active member of the Coalition for Community Schools, NASBHC strongly endorses education policy that supports a variety of services designed to improve outcomes in all areas of children's lives, including:

- health services
- mental health services
- oral health services
- social services
- nutrition (e.g., free and reduced lunch)
- family supports, including enrichment classes on child rearing, employment, and housing
- extended day classes and tutoring

In response to requests from state association leaders, NASBHC hosted two policy events focusing on education reform and the potential role of SBHCs. On October 14, Jeanita Richardson, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Public Health Policy and Practice, University of Virginia, presented a webinar on *Federal Education Policy and SBHCs*. Jeanita covered federal funding streams and legislation.

Her presentation was followed during the state association ED meeting the next week, where Marty Blank and Phillip Lovell continued the conversation about education policy and SBHCs. Marty, President of the Institute for Educational Leadership, and Director of the Coalition for Community Schools, discussed community schools and the current mechanisms for fostering educational innovation, including the Race to the Top. Phillip, Vice President, Education, Housing, and Youth Policy, First Focus, talked about federal funding for education and health, and likely outcomes for children under the pending health care reform legislation.

NASBHC will continue to participate in national conversations about education policy and opportunities for SBHCs. We expect to be very involved in ESEA/NCLB reauthorization when Congress undertakes that work. In the meantime, we will work to educate our constituencies about education policy. To that end, a webinar is scheduled for November 19. It will reprise the presentations given by Jeanita, Marty, and Phillip. In addition, NASBHC staff will draft and disseminate a briefing paper on SBHCs and education reform.

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

<http://www.communityschools.org/>