

Alabama Medicaid receives \$39.1 million bonus for efforts to enroll uninsured children

MONTGOMERY – Governor Bob Riley announced Thursday the Alabama Medicaid Agency has received a \$39.1 million federal performance bonus for the effectiveness of its innovative and user-friendly methods to enroll more low-income children in Medicaid during the 2009 Fiscal Year.

Alabama is one of only nine states receiving a performance bonus from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Governor Riley said, “Ensuring the health of our children is essential to the future of our state. By taking advantage of this opportunity, Alabama Medicaid has made it possible for more children who qualify for Medicaid to access basic health services. The fact that Alabama is one of only nine states receiving a performance bonus, and we are receiving the largest bonus, demonstrates the effectiveness of our innovative program.”

While nine states qualified for a performance bonus, Alabama received over half of the \$72.6 million awarded. Other states receiving bonuses included Alaska, Illinois, Louisiana, Michigan, New Jersey, New Mexico, Oregon and Washington.

The bonus, awarded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, is one of nine awarded nationally to recognize states which had implemented at least five of eight program features known to promote enrollment and retention in children’s health insurance coverage and had increased state Medicaid enrollment above a target set by federal law. The bonus payments were part of the 2009 Children’s Health Insurance Program Reauthorization (CHIPRA) legislation signed into law in February 2009.

“One of the primary goals of the CHIPRA legislation was to boost enrollment among eligible, uninsured children, especially those who were qualified for Medicaid,” said Alabama Medicaid Commissioner Carol H. Steckel. “Thanks to the many efforts of our eligibility staff and a strong partnership between ALL Kids and the Alabama Child Caring Program, more Alabama children will benefit from Medicaid-covered health care services.”

The amount of the payment was calculated based on the level of enrollment success and per capita State Medicaid expenditures for children. States were also eligible for an enhanced payment once they exceeded a certain percentage enrollment increase. Alabama was the only state to reach this threshold, increasing enrollment by 39 percent. To qualify, the changes had to be implemented by both Medicaid and ALL Kids, the state’s CHIP program.

Program features implemented in Alabama included providing 12 months of continuous enrollment, removing the requirement for an in-person interview in order to qualify for coverage, streamlining the eligibility renewal process, removal of asset limits for pregnant women and

children, and use of a joint application between Medicaid, ALL Kids and Blue Cross Blue Shields' Caring Foundation.

###

For more information, contact the Governor's Press Office at 334-242-7150.