

Utah's Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP): How Well Are We Doing?

Research Report #659, August 2003

Lesson Summary

This lesson offers an analysis of Utah's CHIP program and how it compares to other states in terms of benefits and customer satisfaction. It also helps students understand how rules and regulations at the federal level shape state-level program operations.

Related Websites

- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Health Policy
<http://aspe.hhs.gov/health/index.shtml>
- Utah Department of Health
<http://www.health.utah.gov/>

Utah Core Curriculum

6210 U.S. Government & Citizenship

- 6210-03 Students will understand the distribution of power in the national, state, and local government in the United States federal system.
- Determine the relationship between the national government and the states.
- 6210-05 Students will understand basic economic principles and how they influence everyday life.
- Explain how scarcity and abundance of productive resources contribute to economic systems.

This lesson plan is provided by Utah Foundation to assist in using the accompanying Research Report in high school or middle school classes. Please feel free to copy the Research Report for your students.

Vocabulary

Alleviate: To reduce or ease.

Bellwether: An indicator of trends and/or success.

Enumerated: Listed one by one.

Indigent: Totally lacking in something or impoverished.

Leverage: Pooling many small resources to gain a larger or stronger influence.

Outliers: Observations that greatly deviate from the norm.

Posit: To assume.

Qualitative: A comparison based on the character of something rather than its size or quantity.

Statutory: Create by the passing of law.

Viable: Real or self-sufficient.

Quick Questions

1. For fiscal year 2004, what is the Utah's CHIP FMAP amount? What is the importance of the FMAP – what does it mean in terms of the program's costs for Utah?

Answer: 80.2 cents. This means that the federal government is paying 80.2 cents of every dollar of program costs in Utah.

2. There are three types of CHIP programs used by the states, Medicaid expansion, Separate State programs and Combination programs. Which type is Utah's CHIP?

Answer: Separate State program

3. List all of Utah's cohort states and the indicators used in this report.

Answer: Mississippi, Iowa, Kansas, Arkansas, Alabama, Oklahoma, Louisiana, Montana, Illinois, Massachusetts, Nebraska, Pennsylvania, Georgia, New York and Delaware. Indicators are child population, per capita personal income, percentage of low-income children and the percentage of low-income uninsured children.

4. What score does Utah get when comparing its CHIP program benefits to the cohort states? Which states have the highest scores? Which has the lowest?

Answer: Utah-45.2%, Massachusetts and Pennsylvania-67.7%, Delaware-32.3%

5. True or False: Utah's CHIP program pays for over-the-counter medicines?

Answer: False. Utah's program pays for disposable medical supplies but not OTC medicines. (See Appendix A)

6. What were some of the reasons parents gave for rating the CHIP program as "good" or higher in the customer satisfaction survey?

Answer: Affordability, benefits offered, access to doctors, good doctors/care, a program for working families, access to care when needed.

7. Which CHIP benefit rated the lowest in the customer satisfaction survey?

Answer: Dental Benefits

8. The U.S. General Accounting Office reviewed Utah's CHIP program including the waiver that authorized the Primary Care Network (PCN). What was the General Accounting Office's concern about the PCN and CHIP?

Answer: That the PCN was not budget neutral -- meaning that the program would cost the federal government more than if the PCN waiver had not been approved.

Critical Thinking Activities

1. Have class members bring copies of medical insurance benefits either from home, from Internet sites and other sources. The teacher may also want to include a copy of benefits offered to teachers within the school district. In small groups or as a class, students should review all the materials offered as well as a copy of Utah's CHIP and Medicaid benefits. Discuss whether government programs offer benefits that are comparable to private insurance. If they are not, are they better or worse? Have the students design a medical benefit package that includes the best aspects of both government and private insurance programs.
2. One of the concerns surrounding the CHIP program and Utah's waiver for the Primary Care Network is that these types of waivers are pushing the country towards government provided universal health care. Divide the class into two teams, one in favor of universal health care and the other opposed. Have each team research and list the arguments and data in favor or opposed to the idea. Then debate the topic. At the conclusion try to reach consensus by designing a health care program that addresses the issues brought up by both sides.
3. If the country went for a national health care insurance program, what advantages could a government program offer? What role would be left for private health insurance companies? How would hospitals be affected?

Quiz Page

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