




Digging Deep: Medicaid in School Districts

Building data snapshots
to improve school health services

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Digging Deep: Medicaid in School Districts



Speakers:

Chelsea Prax directs the Children's Health and Well-Being programs at the American Federation of Teachers (AFT). With a Bachelor's degree in French, Prax has worked in international development focused on women's empowerment in Francophone Africa. Prax has taught students of all ages in diverse subjects including math, science, English literature, and English as a second language. She earned her license in secondary English with DC's Center for Inspired Teaching, where she has also served as a trainer. A Masters in Public Health from the University of Maryland helped Prax transition to her current role supporting AFT affiliates to address children's health, primarily in schools.

Janet Lowe, MA, RN, CNP, is the coordinator of the Third Party Reimbursement program in Saint Paul Public Schools and the district's web based IEP process system. Janet received her Master's degree from the College of St. Catherine and completed her thesis on health care services that are being delivered in Minnesota schools. Janet has published nationally on the processes of Third Party Reimbursement for health care services being provided in schools. Janet was the Minnesota School Nurse Administrator of the Year in 2007, is the special education co-chair for the School Nurse Organization of Minnesota and is currently the chair of the state Third Party Leadership committee at the Minnesota Department of Education. Janet received the Governor Dayton's Recognition Award for service on the Special Education Advisory Panel and was the recipient of the March of Dimes School Nurse of the Year in 2012.

Thomas Stinson has been a Registered Nurse since 1996 and has worked in various health care settings. Tom has been a Licensed School Nurse since 1997 and his current position is at Harding High School located in St. Paul. He is also an Adjunct Assistant Professor the last 7 years at the University of Saint Mary's of Minnesota Bachelors of Science in Nursing Program. Tom received his Bachelor of Science in Nursing from Bethel University and received both a Master's in Education Administration as well as a Doctor of Education in Leadership from Saint Mary's University. Tom has been a Member of the St. Paul Federation of Teachers (SPFT) for 19 years and has been focusing on bargaining contracts for the last 10 years as well as serving on the Special Education Professional Issues Committee of the SPFT. He is an active member with the American Federation of Teachers the last eight years and serves on the Program and Policy Council of AFT Healthcare.

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Learning Objectives



This session will empower you to:

- Identify commonly available and comparable data points that can be reasonably collected
- Collect data to demonstrate students' access to services in schools
- Create district-level data snapshots about the role of Medicaid financing in schools

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The Data Project



- **A national, 10-item questionnaire to standardize district-level data.**
 - Applicable in multiple states and in multiple settings
 - Demographics
 - Student need and access to care
 - Financing
- **The project complements growing national and state efforts** to expand school health services.
 - *Save Medicaid in Schools* Coalition
 - *Healthy Students, Promising Futures* Learning Collaborative

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The Data



Reasonable questions to ...

- Identify data that is reasonable
- Demonstrate where additional investments can be made
- Attempt an apples-to-apples comparison between districts

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BUILDING THE SNAPSHOT

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Data Collection: Strategies



- **Identify sources**
 - District billing lead
 - Special education coordinator
 - Health services/school nursing coordinator
 - District health provider partners, e.g., school-based health center or hospital
 - Health department
 - Local MCOs may have useful data
- **Compile**
 - Pull directly from public databases and reports
 - Leverage relationships and warm introductions
 - Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)

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Data Collection: Key steps



- Use the questionnaire as a guide
- Record and track
 - Data sources
 - Date of the data
 - Any specific nuances
- Set a date for future collection



Medicaid in Schools

District Questionnaire

Many districts for children and youth seek to transform schools into community hubs that improve access to healthcare services, following the lead of implementation of the "Schools That Work" model as a means of increasing Medicaid eligibility access to underserved students during the school day.

This research project aims to share insights of how schools and districts are leveraging Medicaid billing for student health. By offering comparable data across diverse settings, the American Federation of Teachers hopes to guide and inform specific development in the space. We thank our partners, including the New York State Education Department, the Health Division, Promoting Future Learning Collaborative, for providing the research a solid foundation.

We envision that the following questions be answered and discussed by the following types of stakeholders within a school district: school health professionals, union leaders, third party billing, local and governmental.

Medicaid eligibility

1. How many students in the district are Medicaid eligible? What proportion of the student body does this represent?

Medical necessity

2. How many students in the district have an Individualized Education Program (IEP) that is a part of the Medicaid plan? How does this compare?
3. How many students have an IEP that has a health service? What proportion of the student body does this represent? What proportion of the IEP services do health plans have the Medicaid?
4. How many students have an individual health plan, documenting a need for a health service at school related to chronic illness? What proportion of the student body does this represent?

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Data Snapshot: Informational





1 in 10 students in Chicago Public Schools is enrolled in special education.



6 in 10 students in Chicago Public Schools are eligible for Medicaid.

State the facts

- Essential question: What is the role of Medicaid reimbursement in our current student health service model?
- Prepare to do an apples-to-apples comparison with other districts

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PUTTING THE DATA TO WORK

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Data Snapshot: Narrative 

"The services Medicaid reimburses are essential for those kids, and we simply can't afford to provide them ourselves."
-Special education teacher, WV

Tell a story to advocate

- Essential question: What is excellent about our current student health service model?
- Highlight the impact and value of existing health services and care providers
- Build a case for the return on investment for additional health services in schools
- Increased federal reimbursement is win-win: states, districts and students all benefit from additional resources

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Data Snapshot: Quality improvement 

Identify opportunities to improve access

- Essential question: What changes to our current student health service model would maximize access, achieve equity or reduce burden?
- Analyze gaps: Can increased federal Medicaid participation be leveraged?



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Working Together



Partner collaboration catalyzes change

- A range of stakeholders support increasing access to school health services
- Unions, health providers, advocates and students can all support district staff using the data snapshot

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Thank you!



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Next steps

- Collect data and build a snapshot
- Share your findings with AFT: childhealth@aft.org
- Collaborate to advocate and innovate

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