



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Georgia Department of Community Health Delays Implementation of Georgia Healthy Families

Atlanta – The Georgia Department of Community Health (DCH) announced today that the first phase of implementation for Georgia Healthy Families, the new managed care delivery system, for Medicaid and PeachCare for Kids will be delayed to June 1, 2006. This additional time will allow the Department and its partners to complete the necessary systems development, testing and readiness review and ensure a comprehensive provider network for a seamless and smooth transition of care for members.

Approximately 670,000 Medicaid and PeachCare for Kids members in the Atlanta and Central regions will be affected by the two-month delay. The implementation schedule for the remaining four regions (North, East, Southwest and Southeast) will be revised to begin serving members on September 1, 2006.

“While we are disappointed by this delay, we want to make sure we have developed a systems infrastructure sufficient to support a program of this magnitude,” said Dr. Rhonda Medows, DCH commissioner. “It’s better to delay implementation than to move forward before we are ready and potentially jeopardize continuity of care for our members, claims payments for providers or the financial integrity of the Department.”

In July 2005, the Department contracted with three CMOs, Amerigroup Community Care, Wellcare and Peach State Health Plan, to provide health care services for approximately 1 million Medicaid and PeachCare for Kids members throughout the state. Members in each of the six service regions will have the opportunity to select a health plan and primary care provider (PCP) that fits their individual or family needs. Georgia Healthy Families encourages coordination between health plans, providers and patients to improve members’ health status. Key to the new enhancements is maximum flexibility, no disruption of eligibility for current members and new health education and prevention programs.

The Medicaid Management Information System (MMIS) must support essential functions of the Georgia Healthy Families program including eligibility and enrollment, as well as federal reporting requirements. “There is a great deal of systems interface that needs to occur between our current MMIS vendor, Affiliated Computer Services (ACS), and our Georgia Healthy Families partners,” said Kathy Driggers, Chief of the Managed Care Division of the Department. “We are determined to ensure that our information systems are well-integrated to provide the necessary functionality and that our members have access to the health care providers in their region.”

The Department had projected a \$60 million savings for FY2006 and \$200 million in FY2007 as a result of this initiative. Based on the revised schedule of June 1 and September 1, the Department projects a \$14.6 million negative fiscal impact. “We cannot deny the fiscal impact of such a delay,” added Medows. “However, we will not lose sight of the most important customer in this initiative – the member.”

Members in the Atlanta and Central region will receive notice of the delay in implementation and will also be allowed additional time to select a health plan. The deadline for enrollment will be extended to April 30 for members in the Atlanta and Central regions. Members who do not make a choice of health plans by the required deadline will be automatically enrolled in a CMO. In the meantime, members should access health care from their current provider

Members with questions can contact Georgia Healthy Families at 1-888-GA-ENROLL or www.gahealthyfamilies.com.

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