



NH Department of Health and Human Services Report Confirms the Quality of Primary Care Services Received by Medicaid Patients at NH's Community Health Centers

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Concord, NH – New Hampshire's Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) perform well relative to national quality measures when caring for the state's Medicaid population, according to a report released today by the state's Department of Health and Human Services. The report, entitled: "Comparison of Primary Care Received by NH Medicaid Members at Different Practice Settings," used data from 2006 to describe variations in health care access, quality, and service utilization in 5 different practice settings.

In addition to confirming the FQHC's quality performance for measures ranging from well child visits to breast and cervical cancer screenings for women; the report also showed that Medicaid's per member per month payments to FQHCs for medical care, (and for all other services), are among the lowest in the state. This is especially important given the fact that when FQHC's bill Medicaid for reimbursement, they provide a wider range of services for the rate than for simply medical care treatment. In other words: "FQHC's are a wise and sound investment for scarce public dollars."

Tess Kuenning, Executive Director of Bi-State Primary Care Association, said that "NH's Community Health Centers are committed to providing all individuals, regardless of the health insurance status, the highest quality primary and preventive health care services possible. And, since 2006 (*the year of the data from the report*), they have implemented a number of measures

to increase the availability of hours, days, and flexibility with last minute and walk in appointments to meet their patients' diverse and changing needs.”

The report makes the case for DHHS to continue to pursue innovative solutions for reducing inappropriate emergency department visits, (for non-emergent health care needs), to help bring down the high cost of health care. The Medical Home Pilot, which many Community Health Centers are participating in, is one of these programs. Kuenning agreed stating that “New Hampshire’s Community Health Centers stand ready to assist the department with its Medical Home Initiative to improve the health and wellness of the people in this state; while at the same time reducing inappropriate emergency department visits that have in part been as a result of learned behavior.” Shifting patients away from using the emergency department when it is unnecessary and to the primary care setting will save the health care system considerable money - but it will also save the State of NH dollars that it can ill afford to waste in this struggling economy,

Bi-State Primary Care Association is a private, nonprofit organization whose mission is to foster the delivery of primary and preventive health services to the people of New Hampshire and Vermont with special emphasis on the medically underserved. For more information concerning Community Health Centers or Bi-State Primary Care Association, please visit www.bistatepca.org