



## School Health Center Model Program Overview

# Connecting Students and Families to Health Insurance and Health Care

Increasing enrollment in health coverage programs and promoting appropriate use of the health care system involves three essential functions: *outreach*, *enrollment*, and *utilization*. School health centers are particularly well positioned to conduct outreach, enrollment, and utilization activities effectively because they are an established resource on campus for health issues and have the ability to reach families when they are most likely to be receptive to information about health coverage—when their children have a health care need. Healthy Start sites or other on-campus family resource centers also provide a strong foundation for outreach, enrollment, and utilization efforts.

### Program Components

**Outreach** - refers to activities that (1) identify uninsured students, and (2) provide education for students and their families about health coverage options. Outreach activities include:

- Educating students/families on health insurance options, the healthcare system, the importance of preventive care, and health issues/risks through one-on-one education, classroom presentations, and at school events such as assemblies or health fairs.
- Informing teachers and other school staff so they can educate and refer students/families.
- Determining student/family insurance status and health care needs.
- Implementing Express Lane Eligibility through the school lunch program.
- Training parents or students to conduct outreach and education.

**Enrollment** - refers to individualized assistance provided in conjunction with Certified Application Assistants, county eligibility workers or Exchange Assistants to complete the enrollment process.

Activities include:

- Assisting with applications and follow-up to get all necessary pieces of information and documentation required.
- Problem-solving around specific family concerns and situations.
- Promoting retention by working with families to complete the paperwork needed for the reenrollment process so that children maintain eligibility.

**Utilization** - refers to efforts to ensure that families actually access a health care provider. It is widely recognized that enrollment in a health insurance program does not guarantee access to care. Some children do not receive services through their designated primary care provider (PCP) because their families have problems navigating the health care system, identifying a PCP that is convenient and appropriate, or have language and transportation barriers. Activities to help families utilize health care include:

- Educating families about the managed care system including the role of the PCP and the need for referrals to specialists.
- Assisting families in selecting a PCP (if enrolling in managed care). Families need to select a PCP that is geographically accessible to them and offers providers appropriate to their needs.
- Scheduling a first appointment. Families who speak limited English or have not had experience with the health care system may need assistance navigating voice mail systems and scheduling procedures.
- Resolving access barriers such as transportation, language, fear, or confidentiality.
- Providing referral and case management to ensure that students and families are connected to health care and other services in the community.