

**Family Planning Evaluators
Conference Call**
January 9, 2006, 1.00-2.00 pm EST

Participants

Evaluators: Janet Bronstein, Dave Murday, Jeff Roth, Mario Ariet
State Staff: Joe Holliday, Cindy Thames, Lorie Williams
Sheps Center Staff: Priscilla Guild, Ellen Shanahan
Guest: Holly Felix

Not on the Call

Evaluators: Paul Buescher, Lynne Cossman, Nancy Ross
State Staff: Bonnie Cox, Bernie Operario, Janet Sheridan
Sheps Center Staff: No one

On the grid, item 13 (Budget Neutrality) was the topic for this conference call. Dave Murday agreed to take the lead on this discussion and prepared a summary of what has been done in South Carolina, as well as what he is being asked to do in his 2006 renewal. This was sent out to the other participants and Janet Bronstein and Jeff Roth responded for AL and FL. Ellen prepared an updated grid as well as a table that summarized this information for the three states. This document was the basis for discussion.

The two basic components of budget neutrality estimation are 1) number of births averted and 2) birth cost savings. Until now Dave and others have been calculating the number of births averted by using the estimated fertility rates for the baseline year (before the waiver) and comparing this to a fertility rate for the demonstration participants during a particular year after the program was implemented. The exact way this is done differs, depending on the state. According to Dave, CMS is now suggesting that the baseline fertility rate should be the fertility rate for the regular Medicaid women who have received a family planning visit during the baseline year. They are also saying that the pre-waiver base year fertility rate should be "trended forward" without adjustment for age or race. It appears that they are suggesting that the regular Medicaid population who receive a family planning service be used as the control group to compare the waiver clients to each year. There was much discussion about why this might not be the best comparison to make since the regular Medicaid population was usually younger and of lower income than the Waiver population and thus would be expected to have a higher fertility rate which would bias the results in favor of the waiver. It was also clear that there is not consensus yet among the evaluators as to a better method that all the states could measure consistently. Given the fact that this is the main criteria by which the waivers will be evaluated, the group felt that they would like to continue discussion in an effort to come to some sort of consensus among the Region IV evaluators. Once we have we will decide how best to communicate this with CMS. Dave suggested that Nancy Dieter, his contact in the central CMS Office, might be a good person to contact.

Before the next call Janet and Dave will talk and try out some common ways of measuring budget neutrality for both AL and SC. These results will be shared with the group prior to the February call.

Next Call(s): The next four calls have been scheduled for:

February 13th,
March 13th,
April 10th, and
May 8th

from 1 until 2 PM EST. The phone number for all the calls will be 919-962-2740.