



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 16, 2009

Contact: Lisa Hackley, OAHIP

Phone: (614) 228-4662

“KEEP UP WITH CHECKUPS” PUTS PREVENTION FIRST
Medicaid Care Coordination Plans Invest in Children’s Health

COLUMBUS -- Encouraging parents to get their young children in for regular “well child” visits is the goal of a new program announced by the Ohio Association of Health Plans (OAHIP) and its seven Medicaid Care Coordination Plans. The Medicaid plans serve families and dependent children, a group that includes 50% of all Ohio children between birth and age 6.

Keep Up with Checkups will run throughout the summer, and will be supported by a major public education campaign being conducted by OAHIP and the Care Coordination Plans in conjunction with the Ohio Benefit Bank.

Regular checkups by a primary care doctor improve the chance of catching and treating physical, developmental and behavioral problems that can affect their health and long-term success in school. Those problems often show up well after infancy. But many parents stop regular checkups for their kids after age 3.

The *Keep Up with Checkups* campaign is part of a larger effort by OAHIP and the Care Coordination Plans to educate Medicaid consumers on the value their Medicaid plan’s “Health Care Home” can provide such as coordinating services from multiple providers and access to extra services like a 24-hour nurse hotline, transportation to appointments, and outreach to social services that can help them overcome problems that affect their health, such as hunger.

“There is no question that regular care from a trusted doctor can help people stay healthier and manage illness better. And that leads to lower health care costs such as fewer visits to the emergency room, fewer avoidable illnesses and better, faster outcomes for medical needs. Prevention and wellness make the system more efficient while actually providing a higher level of care,” said Kelly McGivern, President and CEO of the Ohio Association of Health Plans.

To communicate health-related messages like “Keep Up with Check-Ups,” Health Care Home works with the Ohio Benefit Bank, a partnership of the Ohio Association of Second Harvest Foodbanks, the Governor’s Office of Faith Based and Community Initiatives and community organizations statewide to link Ohioans with state programs like Medicaid and food stamps.

-more-



“Encouraging Ohioans to access the regular medical care available to them fits in directly with our mission,” said Lisa Hamler-Fugitt, Executive Director of the Ohio Association of Second Harvest Foodbanks.

The first phase of the campaign includes the distribution of *Keep Up with Checkups* cards and posters statewide, at summer fairs and other events, as well as hundreds of social service agency and Benefit Bank locations. Information is also available at www.ohiohealthcarehome.com.