

TO: Maternal and Child Health Advocates

FROM: Paul Shaheen [pshaheen@mcmch.com](mailto:pshaheen@mcmch.com)

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RE: Using the EPSDT Report in your community

We hope you have found the MCMCH's report: **EPSDT: Early Periodic Screening Detection and Treatment: A Snapshot of Service Utilization by Health Plan For 1999** informative. This report serves as a tool for policy discussion between child health advocates, consumers, health plans, and decisionmakers regarding EPSDT utilization.

EPSDT is a preventative health program established in 1967 for children receiving Medicaid. This program screens Medicaid children for vision, hearing, developmental, lead, and other potential health problems to ensure they have the opportunity to grow up healthy and happy. Unfortunately, Michigan's Medicaid eligible children do not appear to be receiving this service indicated by the failure of several Michigan plans to meet the 80% service utilization rate set by the federal government.

The report on [www.mcmch.com](http://www.mcmch.com) includes a brief background on the EPSDT program, describes the performance of Qualified Health Plans, and proposes policy recommendations to improve the program. Graphs showing each plan's performance for all EPSDT service components and performance across all plans for key EPSDT service components such as vision, hearing, and lead screens, are also online at [www.mcmch.com](http://www.mcmch.com). Please feel free to forward the link to your networks.

MCMCH has taken several steps to advocate for EPSDT quality and utilization. MCMCH drafted boilerplate language for the DCH budget that called upon Qualified Health Plans to make incremental steps to improve the utilization of EPSDT on behalf of Medicaid eligible children. This language unfortunately was not included in the final DCH budget signed by the Governor.

However, there are still things that you can do to advocate for more effective use of EPSDT on behalf of children in your community.

### **How can the EPSDT report be used to make a difference for Medicaid eligible kids?**

- ◆ Meet with health care plans, health care providers, and local partners such as Head Start to share the data on how well preventative health care is being delivered in your community.
- ◆ Meet with state and local policymakers to stress the need for more attention and oversight regarding children's health.
- ◆ Share the report with the media to raise awareness that children are not receiving needed preventative health care.

- ◆ Use with other community and child health advocacy networks to set priorities for preventative health. *For example, data in the report shows that most children do not receive regular dental care, and older children receive the least amount of preventative services overall. How can this be addressed locally?*

**MCMCH can offer community advocacy support regarding EPSDT including:**

- ◆ Providing information on media and marketing strategies
- ◆ Facilitating community priorities and planning
- ◆ Presenting information about policy advocacy strategies
- ◆ Raising public awareness through speakers, conferences, etc.
- ◆ Connecting you with local health plans

Contact Michele Strasz, Director of Community Outreach at 517-482-5807 or [mtstrasz@aol.com](mailto:mtstrasz@aol.com) for assistance. For the complete report and other resources concerning maternal and child health, see the MCMCH website at [www.mcmch.com](http://www.mcmch.com).