



# State Transitions of Stairstep Children



**Medicaid and CHIP Payment and Access Commission**

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# Stairstep Children

- The Affordable Care Act expanded Medicaid eligibility to all children with income under 138 percent of the federal poverty level beginning January 2014
- Twenty-one states covering these children in separate CHIP transitioned them to Medicaid

# Assessing the Stairstep Transition

- **Objective:** To identify state strategies for implementing coverage transitions, practices that facilitate the change, and challenges
- **Approach:** Interviews with Medicaid and CHIP officials, children's advocates, provider associations, and health insurance issuers in 10 states

Alabama

Colorado

Florida

Mississippi

Nevada

North Carolina

Oregon

Pennsylvania

Texas

Utah

# State Strategies and Practices for Transitioning Children

- Proactively addressed continuity of care
  - Helped children enroll in a Medicaid health plan in which their PCP participated
  - Encouraged separate CHIP PCPs to participate in Medicaid
- Engaged in early and coordinated planning
  - Planning generally began six months before the transition
  - Agencies closely coordinated with each other and included technical staff

# State Strategies and Practices for Transitioning Children (continued)

- Communicated early with families
  - Provided 1-3 notices beginning as early as one year before the transition
  - Targeted outreach to affected families
- Engaged a variety of stakeholders
  - Consumer advocates, health plan issuers, and provider associations
  - Transition planning, educating families and providers, and feedback to states on emerging issues

# Challenges

- Information systems and technology
- Simultaneous implementation of other ACA provisions
- Educating families and providers about the transition: rationale, delivery system changes, and effects on coverage status

# Next Steps

- Findings inform MACPAC's policy question:  
*What elements are needed in a transition plan for low- and moderate-income children who shift between coverage sources?*
- Caveat: Transitions to exchanges and ESI may be less straightforward
- Study Part II: Comparison of access to care and use of selected services for stairstep children in Colorado and New York