

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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CHIP Celebrates One Year at the Department of Human Services

DHS increases access to high-quality services and improves customer service.

Harrisburg, PA – Today, Department of Human Services (DHS) Secretary Ted Dallas was joined by Senator Judy Schwank (D-Berks), advocates, and stakeholders to celebrate the one-year anniversary of the Children’s Health Insurance Program, or CHIP, moving into DHS.

“The Wolf Administration is committed to increasing access to health care coverage for all Pennsylvanians,” said Dallas. “CHIP is critical to tens of thousands of working families across the commonwealth.”

In the first year at DHS, CHIP enrollment increased from 150,985 in December 2015 to 168,238 in November 2016. DHS expects enrollment to further grow after launching Express Lane Eligibility, which reaches out to families who receive SNAP and/or child care subsidies. Children in these families likely are eligible for CHIP or Medicaid, but have not yet enrolled.

Customer service is at the heart of everything DHS does and the CHIP program has made the following improvements:

- Average application processing time decreased from 40 days in December 2015 to one day in October 2016;
- 98 percent of call center calls are being answered and the average wait time has improved to 19 seconds in November 2016 from 54 seconds in May 2016.

DHS anticipates \$3.5 million in savings upon completion of the IT systems consolidation, expected to occur in 2018.

In December 2015, Governor Tom Wolf signed HB 857, sponsored by Rep. Pickett, which reauthorized and moved CHIP from the Insurance Department into DHS. The move, intended to streamline processes and reduce the bureaucracy for families throughout the commonwealth, is another example of government that works.

Prior to the move thousands of children were moving between CHIP and Medicaid due to changes in family income on a regular basis. Having the two programs in the same department allowed DHS to improve the quality and coordination of care.

For example, DHS reinstated the Salzmann Index (already used by Medicaid) at CHIP to help determine whether a child qualifies for orthodontic care. This prevents kids from getting braces with one plan, then losing access to care when switching to another plan.

Children with insurance are more likely to be immunized, receive regular check-ups, receive the behavioral health care services they need, and because children with health insurance are more likely to avoid preventable childhood illnesses and benefit from early detection and appropriate treatment, they generally have better school attendance and performance than the uninsured.

For more information, visit www.CHIPcoverspakids.com.

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