

Kids First Background info

Leadership MS Team Members

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Empowering visionary leaders to make a difference is what Leadership Mississippi is all about. The challenge given to us was to work together to make a discernable and sustainable difference for Mississippi and its future.

Upon thorough research and careful consideration of the many options before us, we focused our efforts toward helping our children have healthier lives, which will in turn reap tremendous returns for Mississippi's children, parents, communities, schools, employers...

The result was our resounding commitment to an objective: **To improve access to healthcare insurance for Mississippi children by significantly enhancing and further targeting the marketing, delivery and educational components for the state Child Health Insurance Program (CHIP), to employers and the working uninsured.**

Based on our research, we believed the low enrollment number is largely attributed to the lack of Mississippi residents' knowledge of the program, the qualifying factors and the benefits associated with CHIP. The CHIP division initially implemented a broad-focused mass marketing campaign, and continues to market itself throughout the state. However, our research uncovered a key component missing in the marketing strategy. CHIP is designed for the employed uninsured, and marketing efforts were never focused on the business audience.

...the overall focus of this project is to increase CHIP awareness and, most importantly, enrollment among the children of the uninsured working class. While we acknowledge the fact we cannot change the legislated administration of CHIP, we believe we can significantly impact enrollment by appropriately marketing the CHIP product to its target audience – the business community. Therefore, with the cooperation from the State's

CHIP Division, we formulated key alliances with various groups to help facilitate this project.

Another barrier keeping some parents from enrolling their children is that CHIP has a stigma that it is a “welfare program” for “poor” people, therefore many of the eligible working class do not know they qualify, yet in actuality these are the people who could benefit most. CHIP agents understand where they need to disseminate more information but progress has come slowly. The CHIP program gives employers an opportunity to promote a no-cost “benefit” to its employees. CHIP needs volunteers, associations and other help to get this message to human resource directors at companies with high concentrations of uninsured workers.

In our discussions with Costas Miskis, Director of the U.S. Health and Human Services for the Southeastern Region, we have learned that, to his knowledge, no other state has taken such a direct marketing approach to the business community. Director Miskis has also expressed an interest in being able to offer the marketing templates developed in this project to other states. What an opportunity for Mississippi to claim a first by improving enrollment in CHIP through this project with the help of a network of partners and by being asked to showcase its project to other states.

After validation of our project, our first and most important strategic goal was to develop a public/private partnership between the CHIP division and a Mississippi market leader in marketing and public relations. We accomplished this goal through numerous meetings and discussions with the Godwin Group, the leading marketing firm in Mississippi.

We identified needed marketing materials that could be developed and distributed to businesses throughout the state to increase the knowledge of the eligibility requirements and benefits of the CHIP program for the hard-working uninsured. With the invaluable assistance of Godwin, a business-specific marketing approach was designed and the following materials were created: poster for employers to display, payroll stuffers, outdoor billboards, and an employee information brochure. The deliverable materials, as seen in Exhibit 3, are easily adaptable to suit any future outreach efforts by the CHIP administration, and we strongly recommend that they do so in an effort to have a cohesive marketing strategy throughout all venues. We are also working with Godwin to enhance the current CHIP website, utilizing the new branding and graphics designs, that will have downloadable files for employers to reproduce materials as needed.

Our second most important strategic goal was to utilize the existing synergies of companies and organizations throughout Mississippi that represented our target employer-employee base and empower them to assist their employees through educational and informational campaigns using newly developed CHIP materials.

Timing for the distribution of the new materials was established to coincide with the typical fall enrollment for benefits through employers.

The short timeframe in which we had to work on this project has obviously limited the scope of activities we could accomplish. However, we recognized numerous opportunities that could further enhance and expand the CHIP marketing redesign. For brevity sake, those ideas are outlined below, and we hope to have the opportunity to discuss these in the future in greater detail.

- On-line application and enrollment process
- PowerPoint CD presentation for employers
- Enhancement of re-enrollment process and notifications