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SAFETY NET HEALTH PLANS COME TOGETHER TO HELP ADDRESS DIAPER NEED

The week of September 26 is Diaper Need Awareness Week

WASHINGTON—The Association for Community Affiliated Plans (ACAP) and several of its member Safety Net Health Plans are marking Diaper Need Awareness Week by noting a wide range of activities in which Safety Net Health Plans across the country have engaged to connect people who live in need of diapers to community resources and other programs that can help.

Diaper need is a significant yet oft-overlooked fact of life for many families with low incomes. As any parent knows, babies use anywhere from 6 to 10 diapers per day at a monthly cost of \$70 to \$80. An estimated 5.3 million children under age 3 live in families with low incomes, many of whom struggle to afford diapers. Among government programs, benefits received through the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) program can go toward the purchase of diapers, but only about 1 in 4 families with low incomes receive TANF benefits.

“The health and well-being of a baby is tied more closely to a supply of fresh diapers than one might think at first blush,” said ACAP CEO Meg Murray. “Daycare and other early childhood programs routinely require them – not having diapers means a child is held out of daycare, which means in turn that a parent stays home from work to care for them. Safety Net Health Plans have long understood the connection between a sufficient supply of diapers and good health, which is why many of our plans have programs in place to connect members in need to available resources.”

Among the initiatives of Safety Net Health Plans to help address the diaper gap:

- **Boston Medical Center HealthNet Plan** offers a box of diapers to members who have a checkup after delivery; the plan also connects members in need with local diaper banks and conducts diaper drives to support local organizations;
- **Children’s Community Health Plan** provides diapers as part of community baby showers the plan hosts every quarter for expecting mothers;
- **Family Health Network** partners with Jewel-Osco to provide coupons for diapers to parents who keep their children's immunizations up to date. Since the program started in 1997, Family Health Network has distributed more than 2 million coupons to its members;
- **Sendero Health Plans** offers diapers to members who complete prenatal and postpartum visits;
- **UPMC for You** connects members to a local program, Women in Need, and conducts drives for its local diaper bank;
- **Virginia Premier Health Plan** connects members with diaper need to one of several community agencies. Furrther, the plan provides a pack of diapers to all members who participate in the plan’s Healthy Heartbeats Prenatal and Postpartum Care Program.



- YourCare Health Plan of New York offers diapers to expecting mothers who participate in the BABY & ME – Tobacco Free Program and become smoke-free.

“Our plans are proud to work with our communities to help distribute millions of diapers to families in need,” added Murray. “It’s a small investment in the future of young children that can make a tremendous difference in the lives of families.”

For more information, visit www.communityplans.net. To find a diaper bank near you, visit the National Diaper Bank Network at www.nationaldiaperbanknetwork.org.

About ACAP

ACAP represents 57 nonprofit Safety Net Health Plans in 26 states, which collectively serve more than seventeen million people enrolled in Medicaid, Medicare, the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP), and other health programs. For more information, visit www.communityplans.net.

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