



Elimination of Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment Services

The County of San Diego opposes the Governor's proposal to reduce funding for Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment Services.

Issue:

The proposal to eliminate funding for Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment Services (EPSDT) will result in over 2,000 San Diego County children losing mental health services, putting them at risk for out of home placement, hospitalization, institutionalization and poor school performance.

Fiscal Impact:

The Governor's proposal would eliminate \$28 million in state General Fund expenditures for EPSDT. The EPSDT program is funded through a combination of 50 percent federal, 45 percent state and 5 percent local funds. The state is proposing to cut their share.

The elimination of state funds would result in a loss of \$3.2 million locally. Including the loss of federal matching dollars, the local loss could total \$6.4 million. The County would have to cover the state and County share of cost to continue to bring down federal funding for EPSDT.

Beginning in fiscal year 2003-04, the state imposed a local match to the EPSDT program. The County of San Diego uses \$160,000 from Mental Health Services Act funds to meet the required 5 percent match.

Service Impact:

The state's elimination of funding for EPSDT would require the County of San Diego to prioritize which programs receive funding. As a result, some programs could be eliminated, terminating EPSDT services for up to 2,000 children.

EPSDT services are provided to Medi-Cal eligible children in school based programs, clinics, and residential setting. Children and youth in foster care and on probation also benefit from these services.

Background:

EPSDT is the child health component of federal Medicaid. Every state participating in Medicaid is required to provide appropriate and necessary pediatric services to improve the health of low-income children. Under Medicaid these services include health screenings and treatment and mental health.

The state of California has expanded EPSDT services under Medi-Cal. A lawsuit against the state in 1995 expanded services to beneficiaries under 21 years of age who need specialty mental health services, whether or not such services are covered under the Medicaid State Plan.

Through a settlement, the state agreed to provide state general funds to counties as the match for these expanded specialty mental health services. These services qualify under the EPSDT Medi-Cal benefit and are commonly referred to as "EPSDT" services.

The County of San Diego provides EPSDT services through contracted service providers, therefore contractors would be most impacted by the cuts. Contractors bill the County for EPSDT services they have provided. The County then sends claims to the state for state and federal reimbursement. These funds are use by the County to reimburse the contractors.