

# David Lamkin

CCHP President Focuses on Providing Health Care for all Children



David Lamkin

WHEN DAVID LAMKIN SAYS HE'S COMMITTED TO USING THE PERSONAL TOUCH TO ENSURE people have access to the care they need, he means it. That's why he didn't hesitate to act when a group of disabled, low-income patients voiced their concerns to board members and staff at the Santa Barbara Regional Health Authority Plan in Santa Barbara, CA. "We learned that one of the disabled patients with a specific health issue had been referred to a specialist who didn't participate in our plan," Lamkin explained. "We

intervened to get better pricing for him."

Now President of Cook Children's Health Plan (CCHP), Lamkin carries his commitment to accessible care for all to Texas. Located in Fort Worth, CCHP is one of the vital components of an integrated delivery organization dedicated to providing quality health care and improving the well-being of children.

CCHP is part of the Cook Children's Health Care System, which includes a Medical Center, Physician Network, Home Health company and Foundation, as well as advocacy and public policy programs. Formed in 1994, the system traces its roots to the founding of the Fort Worth Free Baby Hospital in 1918 and today records 1 million child patient encounters annually.

CCHP was recently approved to manage the state's new mandatory Medicaid STAR program, opening up opportunities for substantial growth. "CCHP is poised to go to the next level," says Lamkin, who joined CCHP in April 2006. Cook Children's Health Plan had been the only CHIP health plan (Children's Health Insurance Program) in the area since 1999. Texas recently changed the rules, and now joining a managed care plan is no longer voluntary for CHIP and most Medicaid clients. Cook Children's Health Plan is one of three managed care

plans competing to enroll qualifying CHIP and Medicaid clients in the Tarrant service area of North Texas — a six county area with over 150,000 eligibles. Lamkin says that his first-year goal is to serve 30-40% of that total population.

Texas has the highest percentage of uninsured of any state in the country, and so Lamkin is also looking to attack that problem. For children who do not qualify for Medicaid or CHIP, Lamkin is planning to combine revenue streams from foundations, private donations and employer contributions to subsidize the cost of a new affordable product, allowing parents to pay a nominal fee per month for their children's care. "This worked in California," says Lamkin. "We are trying to do the same in Texas."

Although mandatory managed care is still in its infancy in Texas, Lamkin is working to show the community that the vision of moving toward

universal coverage is aligned with the vision of the Cook Children's Health Care System. "Everyone needs health care — yet there are millions of people who are not being taken care of, and this does not bode

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well for the future of children, our most precious asset. This is an issue that ripples through the economy," he says. "Once our community leaders understand the big picture, then I think we can realize the vision of health care for all our children. And Cook Children's Health Plan will be on its way to becoming a major player in that worthy endeavor."

Lamkin enjoys providing structure to the growing organization and is working closely with the CCHP Medical Director to mirror standards established by the National Committee for Quality Assurance. "It's a good benchmark tool," he says. "We have already created a committee that addresses network and clinical management issues. We're also in the process of implementing a new marketing plan that incorporates television and radio advertising," he notes. In addition, he has directed staff to find a new technology vendor, which will be able to support the

more sophisticated needs of the growing Health Plan over the coming years. "CCHP is at a crucial step in its evolution and we are ready to make our mark."

Active in the non-profit managed care industry for over 30 years, Lamkin began his career as assistant administrator of an outpatient clinic that served a low-income population in South Central Los Angeles and was a major provider of care for a Medi-Cal Prepaid Health Plan (PHP). He later became project director and then vice president for the PHP. He went on to spend 22 years as CEO and executive director of the Santa Barbara Regional Health Authority, a unique, nationally-recognized public entity which oversees health care for most of that county's 60,000 low-income residents.

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In Lamkin's view, communicating a clear vision and using a collaborative approach are the keys to motivating staff and building a successful organization. "You need to genuinely value the people you work with and create an atmosphere where innovation is rewarded," he says. In the late 1980s, the Ford Foundation and John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University named the Santa Barbara Regional Health Authority one of the top ten innovative public projects in the country, reflecting the success of his leadership style.

David has no plans to slow down any time soon. For now, he's focused on positioning CCHP to provide quality health care to every individual who needs it. Even after retirement, he sees himself advising healthcare organizations and communities about healthcare reform and universal coverage. "You want to make sure that when you get to the end of your career, you've made a real difference in people's lives," he says.

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