



AAICAMA

Building Bridges Across State Lines

In 2009 human services agencies faced their most fiscally challenging time since the Association of Administrators of the Interstate Compact on Adoption and Medical Assistance (AAICAMA) began its work in 1986. Many difficult choices had to be made in both staffing and resources. Human services workers across the country are now working harder and using each available resource with care. Despite these constraints, ICAMA professionals maintain a clear commitment to the children adopted from their foster care systems.

AAICAMA works hard to make effective use of the resources provided by the states. Last year, prompted by ICAMA administrators, the association instituted in-person and teleconference trainings to help states comply with the mandates of the compact, integrate new legislation, and facilitate Medicaid transfer efficiently and smoothly in interstate cases. These trainings are always provided at no cost to members, and will continue in 2010. The goal of all association work is to support and train interstate staff to ensure that all children protected by the ICAMA receive uninterrupted services, as is mandated by law, thereby strengthening permanency.

AAICAMA regularly reviews, analyzes, and summarizes changes to federally subsidized adoption policy so states clearly understand the impact of new federal rules and how they can be implemented.

It is clear from the following report that the services provided by AAICAMA support the national network of ICAMA professionals and provide a venue for states to work together to create solutions to both systemic and individual case challenges.

AAICAMA is an important support for children and their adoptive families. The provision of medical and other post-adoption supports to a child, no matter where he or she lives in the U.S., is an important priority for the 50 member states and jurisdictions. The commitment of each member state to AAICAMA has helped preserve permanency for thousands of children.



AAICAMA...It's all about the kids!

Training & Education

AAICAMA undertook several training activities to expand members' understanding of Medicaid and to reach more of those who routinely administer the ICAMA.

★ In 2009, AAICAMA convened **3 audio conference calls** on key interstate issues identified by members. These calls allowed interactive exchanges among states regarding problematic interstate policy and practice issues. In addition to providing an opportunity for training on Medicaid-related issues, the calls also allowed states to pose questions to area experts.

The AAICAMA sponsored audio calls included presentations and Q&A's by staff from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) on Medicaid eligibility for title IV-E children.

Representatives of more than 40 interstate offices participated to learn more about Medicaid and its application in interstate cases. As a result, the training was offered twice during the year ICAMA and ICPC staff.

★ A **Regional Meeting** was held for mid-Atlantic states in Washington, DC in September 2009. The meeting, which was open to all states via conference call, offered training on Medicaid for title IV-E and state-funded adoption assistance eligible children in interstate situations. In addition Children's Bureau staff presented on the adoption assistance provisions in the Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008 to help educate members on this landmark child welfare legislation.

★ **Evaluations** of the meeting and conference calls were uniformly positive.

Improve Collection & Use of Data

Data provides the framework for sound adoption programs and policy development, the timely transfer of benefits in interstate cases and more efficient targeting of limited resources.

ICAMA State Pages — ICAMA State Pages were developed specifically to facilitate interstate practice. Access to complete and accurate information about each state's staff and interstate policies and practices is important for the efficient administration of ICAMA. To this end, AAICAMA's State Page Information Survey was sent out to all members in 2009. The data was gathered in individual phone calls with each state and will be posted on AAICAMA's website.

Adoption Assistance State Pages — AAICAMA worked collaboratively with the National Resource Center on Adoption (NRCA) to update each state's adoption assistance page in 2009. This state-specific information on each state's adoption program that was gathered was posted on the Child Welfare information Gateway (CWIG) website.

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Technical Assistance

Technical Assistance is one of the cornerstones of AAICAMA's services to the states. AAICAMA staff routinely provide technical assistance on interstate adoption and medical assistance issues to state and county staff, and families. Secretariat staff offer expertise and information on Compact administration, title IV-E and state-funded adoption assistance programs, eligibility for and the responsibility for the provision of Medicaid within the adoption assistance programs, and related adoption issues and programs.

In 2009, staff responded to more than **75 requests** for technical assistance from state adoption workers state Medicaid staff, assistant attorney generals, child welfare associations, and parents. The majority concerned such issues as Medicaid eligibility for state-funded Adoption Assistance-eligible children, application of COBRA-reciprocity, and the adoption-related provisions in Fostering Connections.

Improving Practice & Administration

★ The **AAICAMA website** (<http://www.aaicama.org>) provides interstate professionals with easily accessible information on state Compact administrators, recent legislation affecting Medicaid and title IV-E programs, training materials, and other AAICAMA resources. The *Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)* reflect actual technical assistance questions on title XIX Medicaid for title IV-E and state-funded adoption assistance eligible children. New FAQs are added to as new issues arise. The overarching goal of the site is to help state ICAMA professionals provide seamless Medicaid and other post-adoption services to eligible children who come to live in their states.

★ Improving the ICAMA administrative processes of states is a continuing project. The **AAICAMA state page information survey** was designed to provide state-specific data to help inform interstate practice such as: timeframes to issuance of a Medicaid card; ICAMA processing procedures; and other key interstate practices. The survey also updated available information on state-specific policy and practice.

★ Ready **access to secretariat staff** on emerging interstate issues and pressing questions enable ICAMA professionals to increase their capacity in the interstate transfer of Medicaid to adoption assistance eligible children.

★ **Advocacy for COBRA-reciprocity**, which assures Medicaid provision to state-funded children in interstate moves, is a continuing priority for AAICAMA. AAICAMA staff is working with CMS to define and clarify the COBRA in federal law. Staff also worked directly with administrators in the District of Columbia, Illinois, and Nebraska to promote the adoption of a policy of COBRA-reciprocity.



Legislative and Legal Analysis

- ★ Staff analyzed the implications of *Fostering Connections* on the federal adoption assistance program, the provision of Medicaid, and the administration of the ICAMA. Staff provided members with summaries of sections and provisions impacting adoption programs and a flow chart of the new eligibility criteria of the title IV-E adoption assistance program eligibility under the Act.
- ★ AAICAMA sent excerpts from NAPCWA Weekly updates summarizing the most recent federal child welfare policy information relevant to the administration of the compact.
- ★ Staff analyzed technical assistance to determine the impact of new federal legislation on adoption assistance and Medicaid in interstate practice. AAICAMA serves as the repository of information on interstate adoption issues, giving it a unique and valuable perspective to share with states to improve interstate practice.

Partnerships

★ A working relationship with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) provided clear indicators of the value of a **joint all-state teleconference** on *Medicaid Eligibility for Title IV-E Adoption Assistance Children and Medicaid Provision in Interstate Adoption Assistance Cases*. More than 40 interstate offices participated.

★ Work with National Association of Public Child Welfare Administrators (NAPCWA) in 2009 expanded. AAICAMA is working with NAPCWA on the issues surrounding **Guardianship Assistance Program (GAP) provisions** in *Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008* when these children move interstate.

Currently, there are no uniform forms or procedures to ensure Medicaid provision to guardianship cases in interstate situations. AAICAMA is proactively proposing forms and procedures for the processing of interstate GAP cases.

★ A stronger working partnership work with the American Public Human Services Association's (APHSA) Health Policy staff and Medicaid state staff helps solve **problems encountered by adoptive families in interstate moves**.

Secretariat staff is consulting with APHSA's Health Policy staff to determine the implications of the **new health reform bill** on the provision of Medicaid to children protected by the ICAMA.

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Visit AAICAMA's web site at:
<http://www.aaicama.org>