WHAT COVERING KIDS & FAMILIES TELLS US ABOUT SCHIP

Judith Wooldridge

Alliance for Health Reform Briefing
February 26, 2007
Covering Kids & Families

- Funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
- A nationwide grant program to promote children’s coverage:
  - Covering Kids 1999-2001
  - Covering Kids & Families (CKF) 2002-2006
- 46 state CKF grantees
- 152 local CKF grantees
Four Strategies for Increasing Enrollment

* The Foundation promoted four strategies for CKF:
  - Outreach
  - Simplification
  - Coordination
  - Collaboration

* How did these strategies affect enrollment?
1. Outreach Is Crucial For Sustaining New Enrollment

- California: new enrollment stagnated during the 2001-2003 economic downturn

- State cut outreach

- But local outreach through CKF and other programs can limit stagnation—e.g., CA, VA
2. Simplification Increases Enrollment

- Virginia made it easier for families to apply to SCHIP
- Virginia also adopted a “No Wrong Door” policy for Medicaid enrollees
- SCHIP and Medicaid enrollment increased sharply after these changes
3. Coordination of SCHIP and Medicaid Increases Enrollment

- Arkansas renamed SCHIP and Medicaid as “ARKids First” in 2000
- Arkansas also simplified enrollment
- Enrollment increased for both programs
4. Collaboration Improves Program Implementation

- State and local officials and CKF staff collaborated on process improvement.
- State and local coalitions worked with state officials on policy change.
Implications For Reauthorization

- Maintain program flexibility so states can:
  - Adopt outreach
  - Simplify procedures
  - Coordinate programs
  - Collaborate

- Encourage states to enroll children during economic downturns