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For Immediate Release

May 10, 2018

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Kansas Expands Health Services for Children

CHIP recipients gain greater access to mental health and substance use services

TOPEKA – Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) Secretary Jeff Andersen is pleased to announce the State of Kansas has received federal approval to strengthen access to mental health and substance use services for participants of the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP). The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) approved KDHE’s CHIP Parity State Plan Amendment, which requires that mental health and substance use disorder treatments be considered equally with medical and surgical benefits. Kansas is the third state in the country to receive approval for this amendment.

“This Parity Amendment ensures that mental health and substance use disorders are treated no differently than other medical disorders by Medicaid and larger insurance plans,” said KDHE Chief Medical Officer Dr. Greg Lakin. “It provides protection to patients with these types of diagnoses, where, historically, they were often treated differently.”

The amendment is part of the mental health regulations put into effect by CMS on Oct. 1, 2017. CHIP provides health care coverage for low-income children living in families with incomes that exceed Medicaid limits. Within CHIP, states are awarded yearly allotments. Kansas provides low-cost health insurance coverage to children who are under the age of 19, do not qualify for Medicaid, have family incomes under 232 percent of the federal poverty level, and are not eligible for State employee health insurance and are not covered by private health insurance.

“KDHE worked quickly with CMS to get this amendment approved for CHIP recipients,” said KDHE Medicaid Director Jon Hamdorf. “This is just one of our efforts to expand access to vital services for low-income Kansans.”

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Protect and Improve the Health and Environment of all Kansans.