- Introduction

The Center for Healthy Communities (Center, a community-academic partnership with the Dayton Community, Wright State University, Sinclair Community College, and dozens of health and human/social services organizations in the Greater Miami Valley, is committed to improving the health of the community through programs such as the Medicaid Outreach Program. Medicaid Outreach Consortium Initiative which involved over forty health and human services agencies, an extensive video and print media public relations campaign, an intensive outreach worker follow-up component, and a county wide tracking system assessing the most effective types of education and follow-up to insure a high level of Medicaid enrollment.

- Medicaid Outreach Program Review

The Center has taken a leading role locally, and at the state and national levels, to demonstrate the effectiveness of para-professionals in the healthcare and human services workforce call Community Health Advocates (CHAs). In Montgomery County CHAs are primarily involved in linking community members to needed resources with an emphasis on connecting people to health care services. In 1998, following the Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, the Balanced Budget Act of 1997, welfare reform moving us to the TANF system, and Medicaid reform that increased eligibility for parents to 150% FPL, and more broadly introduced the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP), Health Families/Healthy Start (HF/HS) in Ohio, the federal government mandated Medicaid set aside funds for the purpose of educating the public about CHIP and providing additional/supplemental outreach services to enroll children and families. In the first year federal government set aside funds were available, Public Health Dayton and Montgomery County (PHDMC) formerly (Combined Health District) was the agency with whom Montgomery County Job and Family Services (MCJFS) contracted to coordinate services (Resolution 98-2079, 10/28/98). Funds were spent in large part to support extensive marketing research and public education campaigns. The Center for Healthy Communities was engaged to provide training and education to service providers and outreach workers.

- Provider Training and Education

In SFY 2000 the Center became the agency with whom MCJFS contracted to coordinate the Medicaid Outreach Program. Throughout the County twice annually, in partnership with MCJFS Center staff hosts Medicaid eligibility training seminars to update the community about any changes in services, eligibility or procedures for Medicaid applications. Additionally, Center staff host continuing education seminars for the provider community covering a broad range of topics related to safety net services. The Center continued to be funded in that role through SFY 2005. Although the funding sources supporting the program changed over the years, the contract for services in 2000 between MCJFS and the Center set in place the structure through which the Medicaid Outreach Consortium would function over the next five years during which MCJFS continued to fund the project.

Center staff took responsibility for convening the Medicaid Outreach Consortium, coordinating provider training, public health education efforts, outreach services and evaluation of the program, and for managing sub-contracts with Greater Dayton Hospital Association (GDAHA), Family Services Association
and HelpLink. While MCJFS fiscal support for the project ended in June, 2005, the Center has continued to support parts of the program. The Medicaid Outreach Consortium (MOC) has met initially monthly and later bi-monthly since 1999 through to the present. MOC member organizations include: PHDMC, GDAHA, Medicaid managed care organizations, health and human services providers. Initially the role of MOC was to keep providers abreast of the changing eligibility requirements. As the program matured, MOC served a coordinating function for outreach services and monitoring program outcomes.