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Outreach

Communities Connecting Kids With Health Coverage

SCHIP Renewal- The Story Continues

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For the past 10 years, SCHIP, known as FAMIS in Virginia, has provided health coverage to kids whose parents are either not offered health insurance for their family through their employer, or who cannot afford the coverage that is offered. Nationally more than 6 million children are covered by SCHIP and more than 137,000 of Virginia's children were covered at some point in 2006. This program was set to expire on September 30, but has been extended until November 16, 2007 at the current funding level.

Compromise Legislation

Leaders in both the House and Senate developed a compromise piece of legislation that would expand the program by approximately \$35 billion over five years. Estimates indicate that by 2012, a total of 3.8 million children who otherwise would be uninsured would have health care coverage under this bipartisan agreement. Both the House and Senate overwhelmingly passed this legislation. The Senate secured a veto-proof majority of 67 votes, while the House was 15 votes shy of a veto-proof margin.

On October 2, 2007, President Bush vetoed this bipartisan legislation. The President continues to advocate for his budget proposal of an additional \$5 billion for program costs over the same five year period.

The Congressional Budget Office has reported that the current funding levels,

set in 1997, are not adequate to keep up with the number of uninsured kids, so it will take at least an increase of \$14 billion in federal funding to cover children currently enrolled in these programs, with more money needed to cover additional uninsured, currently eligible children. According to these estimates, the funding proposed by President Bush's plan will not be sufficient to maintain the current eligibility levels for SCHIP.

Following President Bush's veto of the bipartisan legislation, both the House and Senate are working to obtain an override of the Presidential veto so that the SCHIP program will be adequately funded.

Normal Operation Continues

As the reauthorization process continues, Virginia's FAMIS program will continue normal operations, and will provide health care coverage to more than 83,000 children and 850 pregnant women. Without reauthorization or a continuing resolution in place, current estimates indicate that the remaining federal fiscal year 2007 allocation to Virginia will continue to sustain the FAMIS program through March 2008.

As the activity on the road to reauthorization continues, stay tuned for additional information.

Inside:

Update from DMAS

SCHIP Press Conference

Governor's Health Reform Commission Recommendations

FAMIS Faces

Goodbye to Linda Nablo

Did You Know?

New Project Connect Workers



Update from DMAS

Back to School Campaign

Back to School Campaign – DMAS is currently in the midst of running their multi-faceted annual back-to-school marketing and outreach campaign. A mix of TV, radio and print ads are currently working to spread the news about child health insurance across Virginia.

As part of the annual Back-to-School campaign, FAMIS delivered materials to the Metro Richmond YMCA for the Bright Beginnings program. This is a community outreach program that provides backpacks, fall clothes and school supplies to thousands of children for the upcoming school year. Two thousand FAMIS Back-to-School flyers, FAMIS pencil cases and Smiles For Children toothbrushes were included in the backpacks which were distributed to the 15 branch locations throughout the metro Richmond and Petersburg areas.

The FAMIS program also contributed 2,000 Back-to-School English/Spanish flyers to be distributed at the CBS Channel 6 and Food Lion Annual Back-to-School school supplies giveaway event.

DMAS has also distributed more than 600,000 Back-to-School English and Spanish flyers and also 350,000 FAMIS inserts in English and Spanish for Free and Reduced School Lunch approval letters.

For more information on the Back-to-School Campaign and ways you can be involved, go to the FAMIS web site, www.famis.org, and click on Back-to-School Campaign 2007.



SCHIP Press Conference

At the request of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's Cover the Uninsured Initiative, the Virginia Health Care Foundation coordinated a press conference on August 21, 2007 to promote the reauthorization of the SCHIP (FAMIS) program. The event featured Secretary of Health and Human Resources Marilyn Tavenner; Tom Byrd, President of Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Virginia; Princess Moss, President of the Virginia Education Association; and two families with children covered by FAMIS. Delegate Phil Hamilton, called away at the last moment, provided remarks that were read during the event.



"Far too many kids in Virginia and across the nation are uninsured and do not receive the care they need, but things could get even worse," said Secretary Tavenner, speaking at the event. "SCHIP has been a



Pictured (left to right): Genia Jones, Princess Moss, Marilyn Tavenner, Deborah Oswalt (Executive Director of VHCF), Tom Byrd, Leslie Wyatt (CEO of Children's Hospital) and Nicole Fields.

successful partnership between the federal government and the state, and we want it to continue and grow. SCHIP has proven to work when we give it the resources needed for success."

The press conference was attended by more than 80 supporters of the FAMIS program in Virginia, and received media attention from WTVR-TV CBS Channel 6 and the *Richmond Times-Dispatch*.

Governor's Health Reform Commission

Governor Tim Kaine created the Governor's Health Reform Commission in August 2006, and charged the Commission with making recommendations to improve the health care system in Virginia. The Commission is composed of 32 individuals representing state legislators, health care leaders, consumer and patient advocates and citizens, and was subdivided into four workgroups:

- Access to Care
- Quality, Transparency and Prevention
- Healthcare Workforce
- Long-term Care

In meetings held throughout the last year, the Commission generated more than 40 recommendations.

Access to Care Workgroup

Specifically, the Access to Care Workgroup was charged with identifying groups, regions and populations where rates of uninsured citizens are high; investigating how to improve access to health care and health insurance for these groups; and recommending Medicaid changes, funding opportunities, innovative pilots, demonstrations, or small group/individual market reforms to foster change. The Access to Care Workgroup recommended a more frequent study of Virginia's uninsured and additional funding (\$10 million) to strengthen Virginia's health safety net including community health centers and free clinics.

Recommendations

The Access to Care Workgroup recommends Virginia consider insuring additional low-income Virginians through the Medicaid and FAMIS programs. Specific recommendations include:

- Expanding Medicaid eligibility to 100% FPL for parents and caretaker adults aged 19-64;
- Including routine dental services as part of the any Medicaid eligibility expansion for parents, or include routine dental services for existing parents enrolled in the Medicaid program;
- Expanding FAMIS eligibility from 200% FPL to 300% FPL for children; and
- Increasing FAMIS Moms eligibility for pregnant women from 185% FPL to 200% FPL.

A final recommendation from this workgroup is to create a private health insurance product for uninsured Virginians with income less than 200% of FPL who have no other access to public or private health insurance.

To see the full list of recommendations and review a copy of the full Health Reform Commission Report, go to:
http://www.hhr.virginia.gov/Initiatives/HealthReform/MeetingMats/FullCouncil/Health_Reform_Comm_Draft_Report.pdf.

SignUpNow Corner

Want to attend a SignUpNow FAMIS workshop?

Check out the training calendar at:

www.signupnowva.org/calendar.asp.

Workshops are now scheduled for:

- Tuesday, October 23 at Inova Fair Oaks Hospital in Fairfax, VA beginning at 1PM.
- Wednesday, October 31 at Featherstone Professional Center in Midlothian, VA beginning at 10AM.

Need to update your SignUpNow toolkit?

The entire contents of the latest version of the Tool Kit is now available on-line at:

www.signupnowva.org/toolkit.asp.

“FAMIS Faces” Awareness Campaign



The Story of Genia Jones

Genia Jones by day is an elementary teacher at John B. Carey Elementary School in Hampton and has a busy class of 21 students. By night she and her husband James, a student at Christopher Newport University (studying to be a music teacher), are parents to three beautiful and busy children. Genia was distributing FAMIS fliers to her students, when she took a better look and realized that she and her family might qualify. She contacted FAMIS outreach worker Julia Melendez, and the rest, as they say, is history.

Dylan, a 9-year old 3rd grade student, enjoys riding his bike and playing computer games. He is also a very good big brother. Chloe, 5, is daddy’s little girl. She loves to read and is a budding writer. Although her mom would call her a princess, liking all things pink and frilly, Chloe also loves to play with her Polly Pockets in the dirt. Evan, a smiling, cooing, 8-month old is pulling himself up and starting to crawl.

All of the children are up to date on their immunizations and have recently visited the dentist for check-ups. When asked what FAMIS had done for her family, Genia replies, “...With three children and my husband in school, we couldn’t otherwise afford the quality health care we get through FAMIS.”

FAMIS Faces Portrait Gallery

To celebrate Cover the Uninsured Week in April 2007, the Consortium of Infant and Child Health (CINCH) created a new marketing tool aimed at showing the faces of families who have been helped by the FAMIS program: *The FAMIS Faces Portrait Gallery*.

FAMIS Faces features 11 families who are served by the FAMIS programs, and demonstrates that these families include our teachers, small business owners, homemakers, outstanding students, and co-workers. CINCH worked with many talented people and partnerships, particularly the students of the advanced photography class at Tidewater Community



The Jones Family (left to right): Dylan, John, Evan, Chloe and Genia.

College. The end result was 11 black and white photographs mounted and displayed at Norfolk City Hall during Cover the Uninsured Week April 23-27, 2007. To each portrait was attached a story board giving some background information on the families featured. The Jones family featured above is just one example of the families included in *FAMIS Faces Portrait Gallery*.

FAMIS Faces has received local and regional media coverage and has been utilized in a variety of settings to increase awareness of the FAMIS programs. Samples of some of the photographs and stories can be viewed at: <http://www.norfolk.gov/humanservices/famis.asp>.

For more information on how to host the *FAMIS Faces Portrait Gallery* in your area or how to create one of your own, please call Penny Smith, CINCH Outreach Coordinator, at (757) 668-6447.

FAMIS Says Good-bye to Director



Linda Nablo, director of the Division of Maternal and Child Health at the Virginia Department of Medical Assistance Services (DMAS) and director of FAMIS, has been appointed Commissioner of the Department for the Aging. Linda's skills in collaboration and consensus building, and her creative leadership which served Virginia's children so well, will now be used to serve Virginia's rapidly growing senior population. Under Linda's direction, FAMIS became a nationally recognized model for children's health insurance. Her commitment and passion, combined with her ability to negotiate complex systems were key to Virginia's success in enrolling more than 150,000 children in the FAMIS programs.

Prior to joining DMAS, Linda was the director of SignUpNow, working to assist community partners in enrolling children in health insurance programs. Linda also served as the director of public policy for the Action Alliance for Virginia's Children and Youth, which is now called Voices for Virginia's Children.

Linda's dedication and commitment to children will be greatly missed. Please join us in expressing our thanks and well wishes as Linda moves on to serve Virginia's aging population.

Did You Know?

Managed Care in Lynchburg

Effective October 1, 2007, new managed care organizations (MCOs) will be providing health care services to FAMIS, FAMIS Plus and Medicaid managed care eligible enrollees in Amherst, Appomattox and Campbell counties and Lynchburg city.

The introduction of MCOs in the Lynchburg area means the MEDALLION program will no longer be an option for recipients in this area. After October 1, 2007, managed care eligible individuals will be enrolled in either Southern Health CareNet, Optima Family Care, or VA Premier Health Plan. Letters to recipients impacted by this expansion were mailed in late August. These letters provided recipients with a choice of the three MCOs. If the recipient did not make a choice, he/she was assigned to the MCO listed in the letter. Medicaid and FAMIS Plus recipients were instructed to call the Managed Care HelpLine [(800) 643-2273] with questions related to their MCO assignment. The Managed Care HelpLine assists enrollees in selecting a MCO, in addressing and documenting members' concerns, and in completing health status assessments that are forwarded to the assigned/chosen MCO. FAMIS enrollees were told to contact the FAMIS CPU at (866) 873-2647 for assistance with choosing their MCO.

CHIPAC Meetings Open to Public

The Children's Health Insurance Program Advisory Committee (CHIPAC) was created by the General Assembly to evaluate

Virginia's FAMIS Programs and make recommendations to the Secretary of Health and Human Resources and the DMAS Director. Meetings are open to the public, and anyone interested in children's health insurance is encouraged to attend. CHIPAC's purpose is to make policy recommendations concerning enrollment, access to and utilization of health care services by Virginia's eligible children. Upcoming meetings:

- Thursday, December 6, 2007
- Thursday, March 6, 2008
- Thursday, June 5, 2008
- Thursday, September 11, 2008
- Thursday, December 4, 2008

As meeting dates approach, you may check for information on the time, location and agenda for these meetings on the Commonwealth Calendar at : www.virginia.gov/cmsportal2/online_services_4096/commonwealth_calendar.html.



Managed Care Website

Effective September 4, 2007, the Virginia Medicaid Managed Care website was unveiled, and provides Medicaid and FAMIS Plus enrollees with detailed information on how to enroll in an MCO or the MEDALLION primary care case management program; lists of participating MCOs by locality; lists MCO contact information and provides information on open enrollment by locality.

For more information on the website, go to <http://www.virginiamanagedcare.com> or call the Managed Care Helpline at (800) 643-2273.



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Special thanks to the Virginia Department of Medical Assistance Services for underwriting the production and distribution of this newsletter and to the Virginia Community Healthcare Association for its continued support of SignUpNow.



New workers Join the Project Connect Team

Project Connect is in its 8th year at the Virginia Health Care Foundation. In this initiative, grants are given to agencies to concentrate efforts on enrolling uninsured pregnant women and children into state-sponsored health insurance. This initiative has helped connect over 40,000 uninsured children with care. Currently, there are 5 Project Connect grantees serving 25 localities around Virginia.

VHCF welcomes the following outreach workers to its *Project Connect* family.

- Tiara Love is the new outreach worker with Richmond City Public Schools (RCPS). Tiara has a background in community health education, and experience working with families and their children as a family development specialist. She will work within RCPS to reach uninsured families.
- Taegan McGowan, the new Assistant Director of CINCH, recently completed her Master of Public Health degree from Eastern Virginia Medical School. Taegan originally worked with CINCH during her Masters Practicum which focused on identifying factors and barriers affecting sustained enrollment of the FAMIS programs.
- Penny Smith is the new Child Health Insurance Program Outreach Coordinator for CINCH. Penny brings experience as a county youth outreach and program coordinator with Washington State University, Michigan State University and the University of Idaho. She earned her Practical

Nursing license in 2006, and has been working as an LPN in Norfolk. As a former classroom teacher and Teacher’s Trainer with the U. S. Peace Corps, Penny has long recognized the need for comprehensive health care as the essential element in both physical and emotional development of children.

- Letisha Odum is the new FAMIS Outreach Coordinator for Clinch Valley Community Action, Inc. serving uninsured children in Tazewell, Smyth, and Buchanan Counties. Letisha’s background includes managing a non-profit dental clinic and coordinating a dental project in elementary schools in Tazewell County, accounting, and administration. In addition to her work, Letisha enjoys spending time with her family and volunteers for Habitat for Humanity and Camp Joy, tutors students in math at Tazewell Middle School, and serves as Vice President of the Tazewell Elementary School PTA.

We wish these dedicated professionals a warm welcome to the world of child health insurance outreach.

