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Outreach

Communities Connecting Kids With Health Coverage

Update from the Virginia Department of Medical Assistance Services

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Impact of the Deficit Reduction Act

It appears that the Deficit Reduction Act (DRA) regulations requiring documentation of citizenship and identity to be submitted by US citizens applying for or renewing their Medicaid or FAMIS Plus coverage have negatively impacted enrollment numbers in these programs. From June 2006 to November 2006, there were 11,900 fewer children enrolled in FAMIS Plus (children's Medicaid). Fortunately, the enrollment report from December shows a net increase in both FAMIS and FAMIS Plus. We are hopeful that this is the result of new policies that have been put in place to make it easier for families to comply with this new requirement.

Policy Updates

Several significant changes have been made recently to FAMIS Plus/Medicaid eligibility policy and procedures regarding citizenship and identity documentation.

In the last issue of this newsletter, we told you about the DRA and its regulations requiring Medicaid and FAMIS Plus applicants who have declared that they are US citizens to prove both citizenship and identity as a one time requirement for enrollment and renewal.

The new requirements have slowed new enrollments and renewals for many families at both the local DSS and the FAMIS Central Processing Unit (CPU). As a result, there has been a net decrease in enrollment in FAMIS Plus and Medicaid for Pregnant Women. DMAS, the Virginia Department of Social Services, advocacy groups and local outreach projects have

been working hard to minimize the effects of these new requirements. Some of the more recent policy/procedure changes include:

- Families who cannot locate and/or cannot afford to obtain Commonwealth of Virginia birth certificates can ask the local DSS or the FAMIS CPU to verify the Virginia birth for them. These families will not receive a Virginia birth certificate, but they can have the Virginia birth verified to meet the documentation of citizenship requirement. *Please note that the family must request this help. Local DSS offices and the CPU will not request certification of Virginia births unless they are aware that the family needs this type of assistance.*



- Effective immediately, children or pregnant women born in Virginia who meet all eligibility requirements other than verification of US citizenship may be enrolled in FAMIS Plus or Medicaid while a copy of the individuals' birth certificate is being researched by the VA Office of Vital Records. This new process **allows families to submit copies of their Virginia birth certificates** to the local DSS or the FAMIS CPU. The local DSS or CPU then submits the copies to Vital Records for authentication. This provision also allows DSS to send old photocopies of birth certificates currently contained in existing files to the Office of Vital Records without having to ask families to provide new documentation! The new enrollment or renewal will only

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occur when a copy of a Virginia birth certificate has been submitted and all other eligibility requirements have been met. For those families who report a Virginia birth, but are unable to provide a copy of the birth certificate, the current process for delaying enrollment until the Virginia birth has been verified, remains in effect.

- DMAS and DSS are currently looking at ways to assist individuals born outside of Virginia to obtain birth verification. However, the Virginia Office of Vital records is currently unable to secure birth verification for individuals born outside of Virginia. You may access information on securing birth certificate from other states through a link on the FAMIS web site. To locate this document, click on the link entitled “New Federal Law Affecting FAMIS Plus applicants” in the right hand corner of the Welcome Page under the photo of Julia and her daughters. The revised SignUpNow *Tool Kit* (www.signupnowva.org/toolkit.asp) also contains information on securing birth certificates from all 50 states.
- Hospital social workers, staff at Federally Qualified Community Health Centers, public health departments and selected outreach projects can now view original birth and identity documents and directly submit copied documents to the local DSS or to the CPU. This new procedure has eased the process for many families, and has increased the importance of enrollment assistance from community partners. It gives another option to families, allowing families to complete the application process with assistance from an outreach project, a health center or a health department worker.
- *The Application for Health Insurance for Children and Pregnant Women* has been revised to include language necessary to meet the identity documentation requirements for children under age 16 without the

parent/caretaker having to complete a separate identity affidavit. With any other application forms, the separate “Affidavit of Identity for Medicaid Applicants and Recipients Under Age 16” must be completed. See the FAMIS web site www.famis.org to download a copy of the “Affidavit of Identity.”

Don't forget that children over age 16 and also pregnant women will need to provide additional original documentation to verify identity. They may use a picture ID, such as a school ID with a photo, a driver's license or a passport.

- Additional time may be allowed for families to locate birth records and other identifying documents. If families inform the worker that they are attempting to obtain the citizenship and identity documentation, they will be given as much as 45 extra days to submit the documentation.

FAMIS MOMS Income Eligibility Increased

It's official! On September 1, 2006 the income eligibility limit for FAMIS MOMS was increased from 150% to 166% of the Federal Poverty Level. Please don't forget that pregnant women applying for either FAMIS MOMS or Medicaid for Pregnant Women are also eligible for the monthly work deduction of \$90 for each working family member, the first \$50 of child support income, and for child care deductions.

Retroactive Coverage for FAMIS Newborns

You asked for it, and now you have it! FAMIS is pleased to be able to offer retroactive coverage for FAMIS eligible newborns. For newborns to be covered, the applicant must submit the signed application within three months following the month the child is born. The applicant must be able to verify that the family was income eligible during the requested coverage time, so families will be required to submit proof of income for each month of requested retroactive coverage. Retroactive coverage is only available in FAMIS for babies born within the three months prior to application.

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Spotlight on Smiles For Children

By Sandra Brown, *Smiles For Children Dental Program Manager*,
Virginia Department of Medical Assistance Services

Access to dental care for children-in-need is getting easier in Virginia. The Virginia Medicaid/FAMIS Dental Program experienced a major transformation over the last year with dramatic changes due to the support of the Governor's office, General Assembly and Virginia's dental community. The new dental program brought an increase in fees, consolidated enrollment into one carved-out benefit, and a single benefits administrator. In 2005, the General Assembly approved an unprecedented 30% increase in funding for dental fees to attract more dentists and dental-specialty providers to the Smiles For Children network. The Smiles For Children program is becoming a nationally recognized model for State Medicaid dental programs.



As a result of these changes, more dentists are now treating Medicaid and FAMIS patients under the new Smiles For Children program. As of September 30, 2006, 235 new dentists have joined the dental network, representing a 38% increase. Eight localities that previously had no participating dentists now have access to dental services. There are also several new participating children's dental health centers that have opened or plan to open. These include the Community Children's Dental Center in Charlottesville and "Small Smiles" and "Kool Smiles" in the Richmond, Roanoke, and Virginia Beach areas.

Approximately 78% of participating dentists are now treating Medicaid and FAMIS children. This is a significant increase, as prior to the Smiles For Children program's implementation on July 1, 2005, only 50% of all enrolled dentists were treating Medicaid and FAMIS patients and filing claims. Participating dentists report that the new program compares very favorably to commercial dental insurance plans and appreciate the streamlined administration of the program which provides prompt prior authorization and reimbursement for services.

As more dentists become available to provide care, more children are being treated. Data for the first year of Smiles For Children indicate an increase in the number of children receiving care. Over 40,000 additional children received dental services within the first year of program operations.

To be eligible for Smiles For Children, children need to be enrolled in the Medicaid or FAMIS program. The Smiles For Children dental program provides coverage for diagnostic, preventive, restorative/surgical dental procedures, as well as medically necessary orthodontia services for Medicaid and FAMIS children. The dental program encourages good dental health and recommends regular check-ups. There are no costs to enrollees or co-payments for dental care services in the Smiles For Children program.

The Smiles For Children program is administered by Doral Dental, USA. All Medicaid and FAMIS enrollees receive a Smiles For Children member handbook that explains the program and provides a listing of participating dental providers in their area. Technology and improved customer service are also helping parents locate dental services for their children who are already enrolled in Smiles For Children. There is an automated phone system through a single toll-free number, 1-888-912-3456 with the option of speaking with a representative. Communication is available in Spanish and English. Members can also locate Smiles For Children dental providers through the Doral Dental web site at www.doralusa.com or through the Virginia Department of Medical Assistance Services' web site at www.dmas.virginia.gov and selecting the Client Services/Smiles For Children link.

For more information about the Smiles For Children program, please contact Doral Dental, USA at **1-888-912-3456** to speak with a representative or visit the above listed web sites.

Questions & Answers

We often hear the same questions at SignUpNow trainings around the Commonwealth. We want to share those common questions, and their answers, with everyone.

Send your questions to signupnow@vhcf.org. Maybe next time your question and its answer will be featured here!



Why are some VA Premier Cards blue and others are pink?

VA Premier uses different colored cards for different programs - pink cards are for FAMIS enrollees, blue cards are for FAMIS Plus and Medicaid for Pregnant Women, and white cards are for FAMIS MOMS. All FAMIS and FAMIS MOMS cards issued since October will also have the FAMIS logo on them.

Which card does a FAMIS/FAMIS Plus child use when going to the dentist?

Either the child's MCO card or DMAS ID card can be used by the dental provider to verify enrollment in the FAMIS/FAMIS Plus programs. Remember that the provider must be a Smiles For Children participant in order for the dental services to be covered by FAMIS/FAMIS Plus.

A grandmother took her grandkids on vacation in North Carolina and one child needed emergency care. Grandma got the bill. What happens when a child is away from home and needs to see a doctor or go to the emergency room?

FAMIS or FAMIS Plus children who are enrolled in fee-for-service may be able to have urgent care or an emergency service covered when they are away from home if the hospital or clinic has a Virginia Medicaid provider number and is willing to bill Virginia Medicaid. Most hospitals in states that border Virginia do have a Virginia Medicaid provider number. If the hospital or provider does not have a Virginia Medicaid number, the provider can call 800-552-8627 to obtain one. If the family pays the bill and the provider is willing to submit the claim, the provider will receive payment for services and can subsequently reimburse the family.

FAMIS and FAMIS Plus kids receiving care through an MCO and who need emergency care or urgent care while away from home must ask the hospital or medical provider to call the MCO to obtain authorization for coverage. If the needed service is determined to be urgent care or emergency care, the MCO will authorize payment. Routine services and services out of the

area which are not approved will not be covered by the MCO.

Several SignUpNow participants have asked questions about the enrollment of newborn babies into FAMIS Plus and FAMIS. SignUpNow wants to clarify this issue for you.

FAMIS MOMS & FAMIS

A woman enrolled in FAMIS MOMS or a teen enrolled in FAMIS will need to complete an application for her newborn. She has up to three months from the birth of the child to file the application in order to have any medical services potentially covered by FAMIS Plus or FAMIS.

Medicaid & FAMIS Plus

A woman who is enrolled in Medicaid or a teen enrolled in FAMIS Plus may have her newborn enrolled in FAMIS Plus (children's Medicaid) for one year from the date of the birth of the infant's birth by simply notifying the local DSS and reporting the birth.

Emergency Services Medicaid Recipients

Citizen children born to a woman whose eligibility is limited to labor and delivery services may be enrolled in FAMIS Plus once an application has been filed on their behalf. Once the baby is enrolled, the local DSS worker will request that the parent provide proof of application for an SSN, the identity affidavit (if not already obtained through use of the revised application), proof of any income that may be needed in determining the newborn's eligibility and any other information that may be needed. The DSS worker will send a request to Vital Records to obtain verification of the baby's birth.

If all information is provided, the DSS worker will evaluate the child's continued eligibility for FAMIS Plus. If eligible, FAMIS Plus coverage will continue. If ineligible due to excess income, a FAMIS evaluation will be completed. If the child's family income exceeds both FAMIS Plus and FAMIS limits, then the family will be given an opportunity to be evaluated for Medically Needy Medicaid coverage.

Urban Institute Completes Profile of the Uninsured

By Judith Cash,
Deputy Director,
Virginia Health
Care Foundation



The Virginia Health Care Foundation (VHCF) contracted with the Urban Institute, a nationally recognized economic and social policy research organization, to conduct its **2006 Profile of the Uninsured**. Current data from several key sources were gathered and analyzed to provide a comprehensive, up-to-date profile of Virginia's uninsured.

Results

According to the study results, more than one million Virginians (approximately 15.5%) are uninsured. Adults are more than twice as likely to be uninsured (18.8%) as children (8.8%), and most of Virginia's uninsured (70%) live in a household with at least one family member who works full time. Despite this working status, only 26% of the uninsured have an offer of employer-sponsored health insurance.

The profile also provides data about access to health care. Not surprisingly, insured Virginians enjoy much better

access to care than those who lack coverage. Uninsured children are more than twice as likely to report no usual source of medical care and to have gone without any medical care in the last 12 months as insured children.

These and many more findings from the study were presented in early December to the Access to Care Workgroup of the Governor's Health Reform Commission. Members of the Commission were very interested in the data and discussed a number of policy options for covering more of Virginia's uninsured.

JLARC Study

VHCF also partnered with the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission (JLARC) this year on its study of the uninsured. JLARC's report can be found on its web site <http://jlarc.state.va.us/meetings/December06/Uninsured.pdf> and the full VHCF Profile of the Uninsured will be available soon on the VHCF web site - www.vhcf.org.

SUN Update

Since July 2006, 356 people have attended one of 8 SignUpNow workshops.

Interested in attending a workshop?
SignUpNow is in the process of scheduling workshops for 2007. An up-to-date training calendar is posted on the SignUpNow web site at www.signupnowva.org/calendar.asp.

The SignUpNow *Tool Kit* has been updated (Version 7) and its revised contents can be downloaded from the SignUpNow web site at www.signupnowva.org/toolkit.asp.

SignUpNow is in the process of developing an on-line, "on demand" version of its "Health Insurance for Children and Pregnant Women" workshop. Instead of waiting for a "live" training to come to your area, you will soon have the option of accessing the training where you want it, when you want it via the internet. The curriculum will be broken into several training modules each 20-30 minutes in length. SignUpNow will let you know as soon as this training option is available.

Cover The Uninsured Week

April 23 - 27, 2007

Start planning now!

To learn more about
Cover the Uninsured Week, go to
www.covertheuninsuredweek.org.

Virginia Coalition for Children's Health

By Jill Hanken,
Staff Attorney,
Virginia Poverty
Law Center
and
Chair,
Virginia Coalition for
Children's Health

Over the past eight years, the Virginia Coalition for Children's Health (VCCH) has advocated for many legislative and policy changes to improve Virginia's health insurance programs for children. VCCH has had more than 100 member organizations since it started and its work over the years has been recognized by many legislators.

The overall goals of the VCCH are 1) to maintain and improve Virginia's health insurance programs for children; 2) to support the enrollment and retention of eligible children in those programs; and 3) to improve children's health by insuring access to quality services. Each year the Coalition establishes specific goals for the upcoming General Assembly Session. **For 2007, VCCH has adopted the following platform:**

EXPAND ACCESS TO PRENATAL CARE BY INCREASING FAMIS MOMS PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY TO 200% FPL

VCCH hopes to improve access to prenatal care for low income pregnant women by raising eligibility levels from the current 166% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) to 200%. Currently, 37 states have higher eligibility levels. Because women who receive prenatal care generally have better birth outcomes, prenatal care is extremely cost effective. By expanding coverage, Virginia could ensure that all mothers of FAMIS-eligible babies have access to prenatal care; avoid indigent care costs; and avoid enormous short and long term costs often associated with low birth-weight infants. The Governor's Budget includes funds for raising the eligibility levels to 200%.

STREAMLINE PROCEDURES FOR MEDICAID APPLICATIONS THAT REQUIRE DOCUMENTATION OF US CITIZENSHIP AND IDENTITY

The Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 requires most Medicaid applicants and recipients who are US citizens to provide documentation of their citizenship and identity. As implemented by the federal agency that administers Medicaid, this new rule has resulted in a net decrease in enrollment of about 12,000 Medicaid

children and pregnant women as well as enormous backlogs and delays in application processing. VCCH recommends that Virginia streamline the required documentation process by enhancing electronic information sharing between the Departments of Social Services, Health, and Motor Vehicles.

ENHANCE THE MEDICAL WORKFORCE TRAINED IN CHILDREN'S BEHAVIORAL HEALTH ISSUES

While Medicaid and FAMIS include coverage for behavioral health services, there are not enough qualified providers throughout Virginia to provide those services. Nearly half of Virginia localities are federally designated as "mental health professional shortage areas." Over 2,000 children are on Community Services Board waiting lists for counseling and psychotherapy, case management, psychiatric services, medication management, and family support. To address this inadequate workforce, VCCH suggests that Virginia should provide funding to: support fellowships for child psychiatrists and internships for child psychologists who commit to work in underserved areas of Virginia, and implement training for pediatricians, family practitioners and therapeutic clinicians in evidence-based children's behavioral health treatment.

SUPPORT NEEDED INCREASES IN FAMIS/FAMIS PLUS REIMBURSEMENT RATES FOR SERVICES TO CHILDREN

In 2004 and 2005, the Coalition successfully advocated for significant increases in reimbursement rates for dental and pediatric services. These increases have improved participation by providers. VCCH will continue to monitor the adequacy of provider reimbursement rates and support increases that are necessary to insure access to care.

IMPROVE ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE FOR UNINSURED AND UNDERINSURED CHILDREN WHO DO NOT QUALIFY FOR FAMIS/FAMIS PLUS

Studies of Virginia's uninsured completed by JLARC, the Urban Institute and the

More Information -
For a history of the Virginia Coalition for Children's Health go to the SignUpNow web site at:
www.signupnowva.org/coal.asp

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Virginia Health Care Foundation have found that in 2005 approximately 170,000 children were uninsured, and up to 100,000 may qualify for FAMIS or FAMIS Plus. In addition, many children with insurance are still “under-insured” because of limitations on their insurance coverage. VCCH will support initiatives to insure more children through program expansions and improvements in private health insurance coverage.

PROMOTE THE VALUE AND IMPROVE THE FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY OF VIRGINIA'S HEALTH CARE PROGRAMS FOR CHILDREN

Health care reform is a pressing topic at both the state and federal levels. VCCH believes these discussions should be guided by the following principals: 1) health care is a priority and a core function of government; 2) there are numerous ways to strengthen and improve Virginia's health care programs without harming beneficiaries; and 3) programs must be adequately funded.

To join the Coalition, please e-mail jill@vplc.org. Indicate your organization's support for the above Platform and provide contact information - name(s) of person(s) representing the organization, phone number(s) and e-mail address(es). 



Special Pilot Project

By Joanne Greene,
Child Health
Program Manager,
Virginia Health
Care Foundation

Inova Partnership for Healthier Kids (PHK) has led the way in efforts to enroll children in health insurance for many years. A program of Inova Health Systems and one of the original VHCf *Project Connect* grantees, PHK is a school-based child health insurance outreach project operating in Fairfax County, Loudoun County, Prince William County and the City of Alexandria. PHK continues to work with schools to identify children who lack health insurance, utilizing caseworkers to provide application assistance for Virginia's state-sponsored health insurance programs or to refer ineligible children to local health safety net providers.

Special Focus

This year, PHK will also focus its attention on identifying and minimizing enrollment and renewal barriers that have resulted from the implementation of the Deficit Reduction Act (DRA). PHK will work with key community partners to share information about the DRA and the policies and procedures that have been implemented to address it. Key partnering organizations from each locality include Inova Health System hospitals and appropriate departments, school systems, health departments, local departments of social services, and various health safety net providers. This

project has four main components. PHK will: 1) work with local Departments of Social Services and the Department of Medical Assistance Services to enroll and renew children into the FAMIS Programs, 2) document systemic challenges in the implementation of new policies associated with the implementation of DRA, 3) identify best practice solutions for working with schools to help families meet the new requirements, 4) disseminate FAMIS Plus DRA related policy to key partners as this information becomes available.

PHK will screen over 1,600 students in 100 schools, and expects to enroll 675 children in FAMIS or FAMIS Plus and to assist with renewals for 170 children. As they do this, staff will document any barriers to enrollment encountered by the families and identify new methods of breaking down these obstacles. Successful strategies will be shared through the Commonwealth.

PHK has already developed an excellent resource tool detailing how to obtain birth certificates from each of the 50 states. A PDF version of this tool can be found at: www.signupnowva.org/toolkit.asp. At the bottom of the page, under the heading “Section V Helpful Information”, click on the phrase “Requesting a Birth Certificate from Another State.”



c/o Virginia Health Care Foundation
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Richmond, VA 23219
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Contact Info Changed?
Please contact SignUpNow to
update your information by
calling (804) 828-6062 or e-
mailing signupnow@vhcf.org.

Special thanks to the Virginia Department of Medical Assistance Services for underwriting the production and distribution of this newsletter.

DMAS Update

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Revised Application

It's NEW! The *Health Insurance Application for Children and Pregnant Women* has been revised and you will notice several changes.

Step 4 now asks for the city/county and state of birth for all applicants declaring they are US citizens.

Step 8 now includes children born within the last three months applying for FAMIS as people eligible for retroactive coverage.

A sentence added to **Step 10** now allows the application to be used as an affidavit of identity for US citizen children under age 16. It states "the information provided on this application can be used to establish identity for children under age 16." The revised Spanish version of the application with this language included should be available in late December.

On-Line Ordering of FAMIS Materials

Now you may order the new application and other materials on-line as easy as 1-2-3. Simply go to the FAMIS web site at www.famis.org. Then look at the lower right hand corner for the "Partners and Professionals" site navigation bar and click on the link to the "Materials" page.

A listing of the available items appears. You have the option of printing the document, or for available items to "Order Online." If you choose, "Order Online" a new window will open containing the online order form. All available items are listed, as are their order limits. Complete the form and you should receive your materials within 10 days.

If you wish to order more than the stated limit, write a request for the additional materials in the "special instructions" section at the bottom of the form. Your order will then automatically be sent to the FAMIS Marketing and Outreach Unit to authorize an override of the order limit. Happy ordering!