




Outreach

Communities Connecting Kids With Health Coverage

Upcoming Outreach Events...

- 6/27 SignUpNow "Next Level" Training— Buckingham County
- 7/8 Family Day at Agape Baptist Church— Portsmouth
- 8/28 SignUpNow "Next Level" Training— Abingdon
- 10/14 Health Fair at Luther Memorial School— Richmond City

For more information on these events, call SignUpNow 804.965.1352.

Did you know?

In compliance with federal regulations, Virginia's Medicaid Policy M0260.402(1) states that the caretaker **does not** have to cooperate in establishing paternity or pursuing medical support for the child to qualify for **Medicaid**. While a caretaker may be encouraged to cooperate in the pursuit of medical or child support from an absent parent for a child who is eligible for Medicaid – the child **cannot be denied Medicaid** if the caretaker declines to cooperate. This is not the case for CMSIP. Unless there is good cause, **cooperation** in the pursuit of both medical and child support **is required for CMSIP eligibility**, according to CMSIP Policy M2120.300.

Interested in doing some **school-based outreach activities**? Go to the SignUpNow web site for strategy suggestions or contact SignUpNow for more information.

SignUpNow Survey

SignUpNow is in the process of compiling a directory of Virginia organizations conducting outreach on CMSIP/Medicaid. To accomplish this, we need to know about you and your activities. Please help us by answering the following brief survey and faxing your responses to **804.965.0475, Attn: Kim**.

 (Contact Person)

 (Title)

 (Organization)

 (Address, City, Zip)

 (Phone/fax)

 (E-mail)

 (Localities Served)

Nature of your outreach activities (check all that apply):

- We display a poster and/or make brochures/applications available
- We answer basic questions and refer interested parties to social services (or another community agency)
- We screen clients or make special efforts to determine who is eligible and offer assistance with the application
- Staff members have been trained and help families complete applications when needed
- We have special funding and/or dedicated staff for outreach
- We participate in a local planning group to design outreach or implement outreach strategies
- Other (please send details on an additional sheet of paper)

Please copy and distribute this survey to others in your community for inclusion in our database.

Northern Virginia Leads In CMSIP Enrollment

by Linda Nablo
 Project Director,
 SignUpNow

Whether or not a child who is eligible for the state's health insurance programs actually receives the benefits of that coverage can unfortunately depend on where they live. Generally, eligible children living in very urban environments are less likely to be enrolled in Medicaid or CMSIP than those living in more rural or suburban areas. While there is much speculation about why this is true – one part of the state stands out as a notable exception to the trend. Eligible children in the very urban communities of Northern Virginia are far more likely to be enrolled in Medicaid and CMSIP than children living in the cities in the central part of the state, Hampton Roads, or Southwest Virginia.



For more information about the Children's Health Care Connection (CHCC), contact Kim Burson, Project Manager at 703.642.4660

Even before Congress created the State Children's Health Insurance Program, the Northern Virginia Access to Health Care Consortium had begun to focus on a regional outreach effort to increase Medicaid enrollment. Acting on a presentation that identified a surprising number of children eligible for Medicaid but not enrolled, the Consortium sought funding from the Arlington Health Foundation (AHF). Beginning in January 1998, AHF awarded a two-year grant to the Northern Virginia Regional Commission (NVRC) [formerly the Northern Virginia Planning District Commission] to develop and administer a special project, the Children's Health Care Connection (CHCC). The focus of CHCC was to find the children eligible for Medicaid and also facilitate coordination of the regional effort to implement Virginia's anticipated new health insurance program. In demonstration of its continued commitment to the issue of access to health care for children in the region, the Foundation has since funded CHCC for an additional two years.

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The Children's Health Care Connection is a regional outreach project that has undertaken

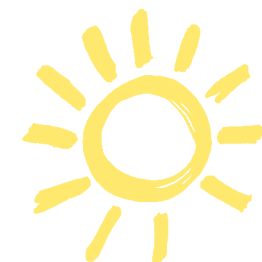
several important initiatives to accomplish its goal of increasing the number of children enrolled in the health care programs.

CHCC has partnered with nine community-based agencies to conduct comprehensive grassroots outreach in a variety of settings, i.e. school health programs, housing assistance programs, local Departments of Social Services, a food pantry, and local children's health care programs. These "partner agencies" are also piloting CHCC's custom-designed software package to facilitate the submission and tracking of Medicaid/CMSIP applications. The software allows outreach workers to complete and print the State 2-Page Medicaid/CMSIP Application, conduct follow-up, and generate outcome data reports.

Information and technical assistance for community-based organizations conducting outreach and facilitating enrollment are also a part of CHCC efforts. A web site provides online interaction among the partner agencies and the Northern Regional DSS Medicaid Assistance Consultant to share information and answer general questions about the Medical Assistance Programs.

Trainings have been provided to community groups throughout the region. At the recommendation of the partner agencies an "advanced" training curriculum was developed by SignUpNow for community-based agencies already participating in outreach. With CHCC's sponsorship, SignUpNow provided the introductory level training and the advanced curriculum in six different locations in the region. More training sessions are being planned for later in the year.

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Update on FAMIS

By Jill Hanken
Staff Attorney,
Virginia Poverty Law Center

As you know, the 2000 General Assembly adopted legislation to restructure Virginia's children's health insurance program funded through Title XXI of the Social Security Act. When fully implemented, the new program will replace CMSIP and will be called the "Family Access to Medical Insurance Security Plan" or "FAMIS". The Virginia Department of Medical Assistance Services (DMAS) is working now to develop and implement FAMIS. However, children will not actually be enrolled or shifted to the new program for many months.

Virginia cannot implement FAMIS until state plan amendments are approved by the federal Health Care Financing Administration (HCFA). The amendments must address changes in eligibility rules, services, cost sharing, delivery system, etc. According to DMAS, those amendments will be submitted to HCFA in July 2000. Once submitted, HCFA has 90 days to review and act on the proposed state plan amendments. Since the "90-day clock" is stopped if HCFA raises questions with the state, the actual approval process can take much longer than 90 days.

Once federal approval is obtained, DMAS will then initiate the "request for proposals" or RFP process to secure contractors to perform various functions, such as providing the actual insurance, eligibility processing, marketing, and premium processing. Once contracts are awarded, additional start-up time will be needed. Also during this time frame DMAS will need to issue amended state regulations.

All this means that we will probably not see FAMIS in operation until some time in 2001. Even then, certain elements, such as the subsidies for employer-based insurance, may not start right away.

In the meantime, our efforts should be focused on enrolling children in CMSIP. All CMSIP children will be shifted to FAMIS when it does begin, and the CMSIP income eligibility formula (which helps many families) will continue only for CMSIP enrollees. Remember — uninsured kids need health coverage **today!**

Survey Asks About CMSIP Awareness

For more information regarding the needs assessment contact:
CVHPA at 804.233.6206

The needs assessment was sponsored by: John Randolph Foundation, Bon Secours Health System, Columbia/HCA Health System, Community Memorial HealthCenter, Greensville Memorial Hospital, Halifax Regional Hospital, HealthSouth Medical Center and Rehabilitation Hospital, Medical College of Virginia Hospitals, Southside Community Hospital, and Trigon/Blue Cross Blue Shield.

The Central Virginia Health Planning Agency (CVHPA) conducted the region's first comprehensive community needs assessment to determine health care access, health status, and perceptions of community needs at the local level. A telephone survey that included 3,000 households throughout central Virginia was administered from October-December 1999. It encompassed 27 localities from Hanover County south to the North Carolina border, east to Surry County and west to Buckingham and Halifax Counties.

Along with questions regarding chronic illness, health/dental insurance, and tobacco use, a section of the survey concerned CMSIP. All 3000 respondents were asked if they were aware of CMSIP, and of those that responded positively it was asked if they personally knew any children enrolled and their relationship to the child (if any). 41% of respondents knew of the program. Of those who knew— females were more likely to know, as were households with children, respondents having college degrees, Caucasians and non-Black minorities, residents of Planning District 15, and residents of Powhatan, Hanover, and Henrico Counties.

The survey data show that those with lower household incomes were less likely to know of

the program, even though this is the audience that would benefit from the program. Households earning below \$30,000 were only 32% likely, as opposed to 52% of those above \$50,000.

Of those who were familiar with the program only 8% knew of a child that was enrolled. Their relationship to these children was 39%-neighbor's child, 24%-relative, 19%-own child, 7%-unrelated household member, 7%-co-worker, and 5%-patient/client of respondent. The Planning Agency asked *The Wessex Group* to examine the subset of respondents that would seemingly qualify for CMSIP (based on income and ages of children in the home). This group, making up 9% of the overall sample, had **only 1%** of their own children enrolled and only 2% knew of other children enrolled (as opposed to 3% in the total sample).

The needs assesment concluded that: "[CMSIP] was put in place to assist lower income households... However, the survey data indicate that, in many cases, the health care decision makers in households that qualify for this program ... may not be aware of its existence and purpose."

CHCC

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While the average enrollment of eligible children in other Virginia cities is about 23%, the urban communities of Alexandria, Arlington, Fairfax, Loudoun, and Prince William average 60% enrollment.

CHCC has sponsored research on uninsured children eligible for Medicaid and CMSIP, the region's outreach activity, and Medicaid/CMSIP health care provider capacity to address gaps in access to health care services.

With the support of CHCC, the Medicaid and CMSIP Coordinators for the 5 local departments of social services have formed the Regional Outreach Committee (ROC). This forum has led to the development of regional outreach strategies and policy planning, provided a vehicle for facilitating communication between the CHCC partner agencies and local departments

of social services, and facilitated the implementation of special outreach initiatives.

According to Sue Rowland, Director of Human Services for the Northern Virginia Regional Commission, "This region's successes can be tracked to the early commitment of the leadership of the local governments; to the special dedication of local government staff resources to outreach, eligibility and follow-up; and to the participation of local and regional private, non-profits, hospitals, and health care providers to promote Medicaid/CMSIP to their own clients and others."

Virginia's Total CMSIP Enrollment as of 6/5/00 is 23,751 or 29%.

Congratulations! The following new localities have achieved higher than 70% CMSIP enrollment: Manassas & Manassas Park. (They join the three previously reported localities.)

An additional 12 localities are between 50% and 70%!

To check your area's progress visit the SignUpNow web site: <http://www.vakids.org/SUN>

News from the Virginia Department of Social Services

By Autumn Barrett
Program Consultant, CMSIP



To encourage every outreach worker across the state to continue to reach out to families in need of CMSIP, I would like to share a success story from a mother that I recently met.

"CMSIP Saved My Life"

Allison Hansen lost her husband when her oldest daughter, Sarah, was 4 years old and her youngest, Mallory, was an infant. After struggling to keep up with medical bills that had accumulated from doctor's visits and medical needs for Mallory, Allison lost her house of 13 years and found herself homeless. Medical expenses often averaged \$1000 per month. Doctor's visits placed such demand on Allison's time that she was dismissed from several jobs because she had taken too many days off. Allison's children are now 18 and 15 and have been covered by the Children's Medical Security Insurance Plan for over a year. Allison states tearfully that "CMSIP has been like a miracle for me. It is equivalent to winning the lottery. It has meant that I no longer have to decide between my children getting the medical treatment they need and being able to eat or have heat or have electricity." Allison relayed the hardships of working several jobs to provide for her children and not being able to keep a steady job due to the time needed to attend to her children's medical needs. She feels that if they had been able to have well child check ups and preventative care, the problems would not have progressed and she would not have taken as much time off. In addition, Mallory was absent from school many days out of the school year because of sickness. Allison says that she can definitely see an improvement in her daughter's scholastic performance since being able to receive regular medical treatment. She beams as she states that Mallory is now on the honor role. Allison says, "it has made me feel better as a Mom."

SignUpNow would like to thank the following Foundations and Coalition Members for their generous funding, start-up support, and in-kind contributions:

Action Alliance for Virginia's Children and Youth, Annabella Jenkins Foundation, Arlington Health Foundation/NVRC, Carilion Community Health Fund, Centra Health, Children's Hospital of The King's Daughters, INOVA Health System, John Randolph Foundation, MediCorp Health System/ Mary Washington Hospital Foundation, Portsmouth General Hospital Foundation, Sentara

Health System/Sentara Health Foundation, Success By 6, United Way Services of Richmond, Virginia Chapter—American Academy of Pediatrics, Virginia Health Care Foundation, Virginia Hospital & Healthcare Association, Virginia Poverty Law Center, Virginia Primary Care Association, Inc., Williamsburg Community Health Foundation

