



SignUpNow Outreach

Communities Connecting Kids With Health Coverage

Upcoming Outreach Events...

- 10/12 SignUpNow "Breaking Through Barriers" Training— Annandale
- 11/15 SignUpNow "Breaking Through Barriers" Training— Fairfax
- Jan. '01 SignUpNow "Breaking Through Barriers" Training— Alexandria
- Feb. '01 SignUpNow "Breaking Through Barriers" Training— Arlington

For more information on these events, call SignUpNow 804/965-1352.



A Fond Farewell...

SignUpNow would like to wish Kim Perry, formerly Community Liaison with Children's Hospital of The King's Daughters, good luck in her new position as Field Coordinator with Families USA in Washington, DC.

Kim was invaluable in her outreach efforts in the Tidewater area and will be missed in that capacity, but she is a welcome addition on this issue on the national front. Good-bye and best of luck.

Help SignUpNow Evaluate Its Publications

SignUpNow is assessing the effectiveness of our publications. Please help us by answering the following brief survey and faxing your responses to **804/965-0475, Attn: Kim**. Please circle those that apply:

1) I find this newsletter, *SignUpNow Outreach*, to be:

Informative and/or helpful	Yes	No	
Accurate	Yes	No	
4 pages are	too much	not enough	just right
4 issues a year are	too few	too many	just right

Comments on specific features: (i.e. FAMIS Updates, News from VDSS, Did You Know?, etc.)

2) The series on best-practices *For Example...* gives:

Good ideas for outreach activities	Yes	No
Enough detail about each example	Yes	No

Comments:

3) If you have a copy of the resource binder, the *SignUpNow Tool Kit*, have you found it to be:

A helpful source of information	Yes	No
Compete and comprehensive	Yes	No
Easy to use	Yes	No

The next edition of the Tool Kit should be changed in the following ways:

If you have additional comments or suggestions – please send them to us. Thank You!

Outreach through Schools— The Story Throughout Virginia

by Linda Nablo
 Project Director,
 SignUpNow

A staggering 11 million American children and teenagers have no health insurance. The education community has a great stake in ensuring that these kids have a fair chance to learn, and it has a critical role to play. Significant new opportunities for working families to receive free or low-cost health insurance for their children now exist. Please join me in this effort to ensure a brighter future for millions of children and teenagers. – Secretary of Education Richard W. Riley

Superintendents, principals, school nurses, and other school staff know that along with a backpack, No. 2 pencils, and new shoes, a child needs good health in order to do their best in the coming school year – and studies repeatedly show that health insurance is a key to maintaining a child's health and regular school attendance. Around Virginia individual schools or school districts are helping to inform parents' about Medicaid and CMSIP and how to enroll their children.

Richmond and **Henrico** are two of the communities that participate in the interagency Richmond Area Outreach Coordinating Committee that is facilitated by SignUpNow. School emergency cards in both school districts were modified this year to ask parents if their children have health insurance and if not if they are interested in learning more. Interested parents will be contacted by Success By 6 and offered application assistance. In addition, Success By 6 is working with 14 area schools to reach out to parents in special ways. One of the most successful outreach activities has been using rewards and incentives (school supplies and books) to encourage both school officials and parents to identify children who lack health insurance.

The Insurance for Children Project of the United Way-Thomas Jefferson Area distributed over 26,000 flyers to every school child in **Albemarle, Charlottesville, Fluvanna, Greene, and Louisa** as part of a Back-to-School Campaign. Local printing companies donated the flyers and the project is supported by grants from Bank of America and the Virginia Health Care Foundation. As a result, more than 200 calls were received in the first two weeks of school and inquires continue to come in. The Campaign is reinforced by public service announcements that play on local radio stations.

The Project Connect initiative underway through the Johnson Health Center created and distributed CMSIP flyers at school registration in **Lynchburg, Appomattox, and Campbell County**. Over 600 families have already responded. Joanne Greene and VCU student intern Yuvonda Garters are busy screening and assisting all those families.

In **Petersburg**, an interagency team worked with SignUpNow to identify several school-based

(continued on next page)



For more information:
804/965-1352
 or
signupnow@vhha.com

- Inside: Update on FAMIS**
- PHK goes to DC**
- Did you know?**
- Virginia DSS News**
- Upcoming Events**

School-based outreach probably began in Virginia with Partnership for Healthier Kids (PHK) in **Fairfax**. Starting with one elementary school in 1998, this comprehensive initiative supported by Inova Health System and the Virginia Health Care Foundation is now operating in over 50 schools. Not only are eligible families given assistance in applying for Medicaid/CMSIP, but also follow-up is provided for one year to ensure that children are linked with a regular source of ongoing health care. (See page 2)

The **Norfolk** school district understands that families need to hear the message more than once, so, in collaboration with Children's Hospital of The Kings Daughter's, DePaul Medical Center, Agape Development Corporation, CINCH, and SignUpNow, several efforts will be undertaken throughout the year to raise parents' awareness. For example, following dissemination of information at the beginning of the school year, a "cool" incentive will be offered to elementary students in October if they have their parents read and respond to information on free and low cost health insurance. A special mailing will follow this to Middle and High schools students. In addition, 5,000 flyers are being distributed to school employees whose children may be eligible.



School Outreach

(continued from front page)

strategies and the school district has helped make them a reality. As in Richmond, emergency forms have been modified and will be screened by school personnel. Parents who are interested in learning more will be contacted by the Petersburg DSS. With the support of the John Randolph Foundation, SignUpNow trained guidance counselors, nurses, and physical education teachers from each of the city schools to help promote the program, identify eligible children, and make appropriate referrals.

What is happening in your community? Are your schools helping to inform parents? SignUpNow has worked with many of these

communities and others to identify and implement school-based strategies to fit local needs and resources. Visit our soon to be redesigned web site (www.vakids.org/SUN) to see a list of suggested school-based outreach strategies or call us (804/965-1352) to receive a copy.

The *Covering Kids* initiative has produced a *Back-To-School Action Kit* and other useful materials (in English and in Spanish). The Kit contains media materials designed to help organizations publicize and build support for local school-based outreach. To receive a copy call 202/228-7227.

FAMIS Plan Stalls at HCFA

By Jill Hanken
Staff Attorney,

Virginia Poverty Law Center

The Health Care Financing Administration (HCFA), the federal agency which must approve Virginia's amendments to our children's health insurance program, has 90 days to act on such changes, but, when questions arise, HCFA can "stop the clock" to resolve any issues. Virginia's state plan amendments to create the FAMIS program were submitted to HCFA on June 23, 2000. HCFA stopped the clock on July 21st with a letter asking twenty-two specific questions. The major questions concern the employer-based insurance component, co-payments/premiums, outreach, and certain funding issues. Following Virginia's response, HCFA stopped the clock again on August 25th asking eight more questions, either repeating initial concerns or asking for further clarifications. The state responded on September 15th and the clock has resumed ticking.

While DMAS can not implement FAMIS without federal approval, the agency is busy developing RFPs and an outreach plan. The Outreach Oversight Committee required by the FAMIS legislation has been created. About 30 members, representing providers, community-based organizations, advocates, consumers and state agencies will develop a comprehensive statewide outreach plan and monitor outreach activities around the state. The Committee's first meeting is scheduled for September 29th.

Until FAMIS, our main task continues to be enrolling children in CMSIP and Medicaid!

On July 21, 2000 Sherrie Smith and Shelby Gonzales of Partnership for Healthier Kids (PHK), a project of the Inova Health System in Fairfax, escorted the Quezada family to Capital Hill to participate in Senator Edward Kennedy's press announcement introducing the Family Care Act of 2000.

Ms. Quezada, a part-time liaison at Weyanoke Elementary School had been assisted by PHK in enrolling her three children in CMSIP. She spoke at the press conference regarding her particular situation and how relieved she was to have health insurance for her children. She also addressed her fears concerning what could happen if she or her husband should get sick or injured.

The Family Care Act of 2000 will give states the option to receive new federal funds to provide insurance coverage to parents of children in the state's children's health insurance programs and Medicaid.

PHK is one of four national models cited in the Report to the President on School-Based Outreach for Children's Health Insurance released by the Departments of Health and Human Services, Education, and Agriculture. PHK and its community partners linked more than 2,800 children with a source of on-going health care in the 1999-2000 school year.



Left to Right: Elita Christiansen (AVP, Community Health, Inova Health System), Sherrie Smith (Director, PHK), Senator Edward M. Kennedy, Shelby Gonzales (Access to Care Coordinator, PHK), Patricia Quezada and her three daughters, Andrea, Jennifer, and Diana.

Did you know?

A simple phone call can sometimes reverse an application denial. Eligibility workers are human and sometimes make mistakes in math or misread a letter from an employer. If you think a denial is wrong, call the worker and request an explanation. Be positive and polite. Often, the worker will reverse the decision without a formal appeal! If you do assist with an appeal, become aware of the specific policy upon which the denial was based and be proactive. Even denied appeals can be appealed again and won! Joanne Greene, Outreach Coordinator for Johnson Health Center/Centra Health in Lynchburg, appealed a denial and the appeal was also denied. She then assisted the family with a letter to the director of the Department of Medical Assistance Services asking to reconsider the appeal decision... and he reversed the original decision! Sometimes all it takes is your willingness to ask a question.

Virginia's Total CMSIP Enrollment as of 9/11/00 is 26,592 or 33%.

Congratulations! Arlington County has achieved over 100% enrollment!

The following new locality has achieved higher than 70% CMSIP enrollment: Floyd County.

An additional 14 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 and

Judi Cramer
Project Coordinator,
RWJ-CMSIP Project

CMSIP Awareness Campaign

During the last week in July and the first week in August, the Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) recently launched a statewide CMSIP advertisement campaign through TV, radio, and newspaper. August CMSIP call center reports have shown that about half of the calls were generated from one of these sources. VDSS hopes that the awareness produced will complement the back-to-school efforts now occurring across the Commonwealth. In addition, VDSS plans to implement several statewide mail campaigns within the public school network beginning in October. The VDSS and Virginia Department of Education will meet in early October to continue to discuss collaboration on school-based outreach, utilizing the school nutrition program in particular.

VDSS to Partner with the March of Dimes and K-Mart Stores

The March of Dimes is partnering with the VDSS to coordinate a CMSIP awareness opportunity at K-Mart stores statewide. The *Make a Difference Day* with K-Mart is scheduled for October 28th and will be held from 10AM - 2PM. If you are interested, please contact Autumn Barrett, via e-mail adb900@dss.state.va.us or phone 804/692-1035. Please include your fax number in the e-mail or phone message, and Autumn will fax to you the listing of K-Mart stores so that you may chose a store close to you. Autumn will coordinate the collaboration of volunteers from local DSSs and community based organizations, so please contact her if you are interested in participating.

RWJ - CMSIP PROGRAM

Health Care Coverage + Kids = Healthy Students is a National Back-to-School Campaign of *Covering Kids* of The Robert Wood Johnson (RWJ) Foundation. The RWJ-CMSIP Program of the VDSS and its Pilots, Tri County Rural Health Outreach Program (RHOP) and Agape Community Development of Hampton Roads, are engaged in area school outreach to locate and enroll eligible students in CMSIP and Medicaid.

RHOP is conducting its outreach activities with schools located in Amherst, Nelson, and Buckingham counties. At the beginning of school, RHOP recruited eligible student athletes at the community sport's physical events. This was a very successful outreach activity.

Agape Community Development is partnering with Project Connect and SignUpNow to reach eligible students attending public schools located in Chesapeake, Norfolk, Portsmouth, and Virginia Beach. VDSS is supplying nearly 200,000 applications for the schools' distribution. Partnering agencies are providing assistance to families in completing the applications.

