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Outreach

Communities Connecting Kids With Health Coverage

Results of the 2003 General Assembly Session



By Jill Hanken,
Virginia Poverty Law Center

Quite a few changes are coming to FAMIS and Medicaid as a result of this year's General Assembly Session.

The Omnibus FAMIS Bill

HB2287/SB1281 includes a number of significant provisions. First, the law creates an "umbrella" program for children's health insurance in Virginia, by changing the name of Medicaid for Medically Indigent children to "FAMIS Plus". This will help outreach and marketing efforts to promote the programs. The Department of Medical Assistance Services (DMAS) plans to implement this change gradually and will use other states' experiences and workgroups to achieve a smooth transition. The new name will become visible as DMAS launches a new marketing campaign and revises the joint application, outreach materials, and the FAMIS web site.

This legislation also codifies the use of a joint application for FAMIS and FAMIS Plus and sets a baseline for FAMIS copayments at current levels. The legislation reduces the FAMIS waiting period for previously insured children from 6 to 4 months and expands FAMIS community-based mental health services to be consistent with those in Medicaid. The new FAMIS services are mental health case management, intensive in-home services, day treatment and crisis intervention.

Twelve-month Continuous Coverage

HB2594 establishes 12-months continuous coverage in FAMIS, unless family income exceeds 200% of poverty, the child turns 19, or the child moves out of state. By eliminating the requirement that FAMIS families report all changes in circumstances (with the exception of those listed above) children will no longer be shifted between FAMIS and Medicaid when family income fluctuates. The purpose of this change is to provide a stable medical home for the child. Families will still be required to renew the child's coverage once a year. This legislation had no significant budget impact because many children will remain in the FAMIS program which has a higher Federal match than Medicaid and administrative costs will be reduced due to the need for fewer reevaluations.

Similar legislation was introduced for the Medicaid program, but it was not successful due to its large estimated cost (\$7 million in state funds).

Employer Sponsored Health Insurance

HB2297 gives DMAS more flexibility to redesign the Employer Sponsored Health Insurance (ESHI) program, the voluntary premium assistance component of FAMIS, by eliminating the 50% employer contribution requirement. THE ESHI program is greatly underutilized in Virginia, with fewer than 30 families currently participating. DMAS is evaluating ways to redesign this program to significantly expand enrollment.

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Did you know?



Back -to- School 2003

by Pam Howze,
VA Department of Medical
Assistance Services



Its that time of year again! The schools in Virginia are just coming to a close for the summer but we at the Department of Medical Assistance Services (DMAS) and the Outreach community are gearing up for Back-to-School 2003. In conjunction with the *Covering Kids & Families* national initiative, Virginia will be attending and creating events around the Commonwealth for outreach and enrollment. *Covering Kids & Families* will have their national kick off on Thursday July 31st in Washington DC and we will begin events in Virginia at the Hampton Coliseum on August 3rd and 4th.

Virginia has come a long way in the last year in enrollment numbers and accessibility for families, and as a result we are beginning to see word of mouth making a dent in enrollment, however outreach is still our biggest selling point. We need everyone to be out in their communities during back-to-school and we would love to hear about your plans in order to assist in advertising on our web site or partnering with you if necessary. Some schools start as early as the first week of August so we need to be ready now.

Send your events and suggestions to Pam Howze at phowze@dmas.state.va.us or (804) 371-8684.

Information on Back-to-School outreach, including the *2003 Back-to-School Tool Kit*, is available at the *Covering Kids & Families* web site: www.coveringkids.org/communications/bts/kit.

New Faces on the Child Health Insurance Scene

DMAS Outreach Worker for Southwestern Region Hired

Amanda Ellinger joined the DMAS outreach staff in May and will be working out of Roanoke to serve the Southwestern region of the Commonwealth. A former intern with the *Project Connect* Project at Johnson Health Center in Lynchburg, Amanda has had first hand experience in assisting families in applying for Virginia's health insurance programs for children. Amanda may be reached by calling (540) 857-6544 or e-mailing aellinger@dmas.state.va.us.

Project from the Virginia Primary Care Association (VPCA)

VPCA has a new child health insurance outreach worker operating in Sussex County out of Horizon Health Services (at Waverly Medical Center) and Stony Creek Community Health Center. A 24-hour per week employee, Juanita Smith will be splitting her time

between these two community health centers. She can be reached Tuesday through Thursday at (804) 834-8871 or jsmith@vpca.com. Juanita is working with the clients of the community health centers, as well as doing child health insurance outreach to other community organizations (schools, child care centers, etc.) in Sussex county.

Grants Manager/Trainer at VHCF

The Virginia Health Care Foundation and SignUpNow are in the process of hiring a person to manage *Project Connect* and to provide training and technical assistance for *SignUpNow*. The Foundation hopes to have this person in place in the very near future, so stay tuned!



Virginia's Covering Kids & Families (VCKF) Initiative

By Kim McGaughey,
Virginia Health Care
Foundation

Virginia's Dramatic Progress

Congratulations! Virginia has made extraordinary progress in enrolling children in FAMIS and Medicaid in the past eight months, with over 34,000 children enrolled statewide since September 2002.

This dramatic progress is directly attributable to the leadership demonstrated by the Warner Administration, legislation passed by the Virginia General Assembly and improvements made by the Virginia Department of Medical Assistance Services. It could not have happened without the hard work of local Departments of Social Services, local outreach projects, and countless organizations, families and people across the state. Great work! Virginia's children and families are directly benefiting from your efforts.

But we still have our work cut out for us. Over 77,350 eligible children across Virginia remain uninsured.

VCKF's Work

This story of dramatic progress and tough challenges ahead are reflected in VCKF's work. In just 8 months, Virginia has already achieved 42% of VCKF's 4 year goal of enrolling 70% of the remaining uninsured children (80,227). The three VCKF local pilots have met 22% of their 4 year goal to enroll 5,000 children. And with the numerous policy and program improvements, VCKF is well on its way to achieving most of the outreach, simplification, and coordination goals originally developed for the initiative.

So the VCKF Coalition is now asking, "Where do we target our collective energy over the next 3 years?" Virginia faces important challenges of enrolling the remaining 77,350 children, retaining coverage of enrolled children, tackling the barriers in accessing care that deter enrollment and retention of coverage, and institutionalizing outreach and enrollment activities within community organizations across the state. To address these challenges, the VCKF Coalition is developing its 2nd year workplan. A major driving force is to maximize our collective impact through smart collaboration with our partners.

Welcome to Radford Project

Radford University FAMIS Outreach Project (serving Giles, Montgomery, Pulaski, Wythe and Carroll Counties and the cities of Galax and Radford) officially joins the VCKF Initiative as a Pilot Project on July 1, 2003. While the project has been active in VCKF since last July, it will now officially receive funding through the initiative.



Evaluating Virginia

Virginia has been selected as one of ten states to participate in a national evaluation to assess the effectiveness, challenges, and best practices in enrolling and retaining coverage for children and improving the state child health insurance programs. The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation has contracted with Mathematica Policy Research and its two partners - the Urban Institute and Health Management Associates to conduct this evaluation.

Richmond Gets Serious About Child Health Insurance

By Kim Bemberis,
SignUpNow

Faced with over 8,000 estimated eligible, but currently uninsured children, the City of Richmond has taken three significant steps toward increasing enrollment in Medicaid and FAMIS.

Step 1

The Richmond Children's Health Insurance Action Committee (CHIAC) and Richmond City Department of Social Services (RDSS) have established a unique partnership. RDSS has created a dedicated Child Health Insurance Eligibility Processing Unit where four dedicated eligibility workers process only child health applications. If they run into problems with a case that needs more intensive follow up than they can provide, the eligibility unit has a fax/e-mail referral system in place. They send information to one of nine area agencies involved with outreach for Virginia's child health insurance programs. Working with the family in ways that the RDSS can not, these outreach workers will do whatever it takes (from repeated phone calls, to home visits, to meeting a parent at their place of employment) to get whatever RDSS needs from the family to complete the eligibility processing.

The nine agencies assisting RDSS with follow-up are: Bon Secours Care-A-Van, CHAPO; CHIP of Greater Richmond; The Continental Society; MCV Hospital; REACH; Richmond City Health Department; United Way, Success By Six; and the Urban League of Greater Richmond.

This referral process has been in place since December and has been working very well. To date 123 children whose families may have never made it through the application process have been assisted in getting enrolled by this innovative collaboration between RDSS and the outreach agencies.

Step 2

Richmond city has been working for over a year to replicate "Walker & Talkers" an adaptable model of door-to-door health insurance outreach conducted by community residents championed by the Annie E. Casey Foundation. A Planning Committee made up of Richmond city VIPs, community volunteers, and local and state agency representatives made a trip to New Orleans last summer to see how the model was working in that city and has come up with their own version.

Called Richmond's C.H.I.L.D.R.E.N. (Children's Health Initiative - Leaders Dedicated to Reaching Every Neighborhood), the project started officially on April 26, 2003. Forty-eight volunteers from all walks of life (from the Vice Mayor of the City of Richmond, to a retired teacher, to DSS workers, to representatives of East District community organizations, to private citizens) are conducting door-to-door outreach from 10AM to 3PM on Saturdays in Census Tracts 209 and 210 in Richmond City. Volunteers received a two-tier training to prepare them for their efforts. First they were taught about FAMIS and Medicaid eligibility rules and how to complete the *Application for Children's Health Insurance*; then they were given some "soft-skills" training on general safety, program marketing and how to approach a family. Outfitted in yellow polo shirts with the FAMIS logo on the back and picture IDs issued by the City, they go to every neighborhood house and offer their services to help families complete the application for children's health insurance or if the adults in the household are also interested in insurance, the 14-page *Application for Benefits*. If families are not at home the volunteers leave a hang-tag on the door knob with information on Richmond's

Richmond

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C.H.I.L.D.R.E.N., FAMIS and Medicaid and a phone number to call for information/assistance.

The ultimate goals of Richmond's C.H.I.L.D.R.E.N. are to enroll all of Richmond's eligible children in Virginia's child health insurance programs, to educate families about available health resources city-wide, to connect families with medical providers and to advocate for quality health care for all of Richmond's children and families. To achieve these ends, the project is keeping close track of their progress and will evaluate its effectiveness in August. After incorporating any needed changes, they plan to start again with new Census Tracts in the Fall.

Step 3

CHIAc recently contacted Richmond City Public Schools to discuss opportunities for a comprehensive year-long plan for child health insurance outreach through the schools. Committed to the importance of this approach to helping students, Superintendent Jewell-Sherman

pledged her leadership and support to the effort. CHIP of Greater Richmond and the Urban League of Greater Richmond are spearheading the effort with the help of other CHIAc member organizations and contacts within the school system. The initiative started with an informational flyer on children's health insurance and the availability of application assistance distributed with final report cards. The school system is redesigning its emergency contact card to include a question regarding health insurance status. Additional outreach activities will be conducted during specific times during the 2003-2004 school year.

If you would like more information on **Steps 1** and **2** please contact Michael Muse, Richmond DSS at MuseMJ@ci.richmond.va.us. For information on **Step 3**, contact Robert Jones, CHIP of Greater Richmond at Jonesrobert2001@hotmail.com.



SignUpNow Update

Tool Kit

SignUpNow has posted some important updates to the SignUpNow *Tool Kit* on its web site: www.signupnowva.org/toolkit.asp. Updated items are followed by a date in parenthesis.

With the coming of program changes on August 1st, SignUpNow will be posting a newly revised edition of the *Tool Kit* on line by the end of July.

Workshops

SignUpNow will be going on the road again to bring community workers up to date on changes to Virginia's child health insurance programs – Medicaid and FAMIS. Check www.signupnowva.org/calendar.asp starting in July for the most up to date training information.



Child Health Superhero Awards

Joanne Greene and Janet Brust, workers with the *Project Connect* project at Johnson Health Center/Centra Health, were awarded Child Health Superhero Awards by Governor Mark R. Warner at the Virginia Health Care Foundation's Heroes in Health Care event on May 6th. One of VHCF's most successful *Project Connect* grantees, they have enrolled over 2,289 children in Virginia's child health insurance programs over the past three years. These two women have demonstrated a unique combination of passion and attention to detail, as well as a great deal of energy and perseverance.

Governor Warner also recognized Pat Finnerty, Cindi Jones, Linda Nablo and Tom Edicola at the Virginia Department of Medical Assistance Services. This "dream team" has worked tirelessly to make important changes to Virginia's child health insurance programs. Governor Warner praised them "for their leadership, and most importantly, their results.... We wouldn't have the results that we do today without the dedication and commitment of this hard working team." Yet, he reminded them, there is still work to be done.



The Winning Team from the Virginia Department of Medical Assistance Services (left to right): Tom Edicola (FAMIS Operations Manager), Cindi Jones (Deputy Director), Governor Mark R. Warner, Linda Nablo (Director, Division of Child Health Insurance) and Pat Finnerty (Director)

The Winning Team from Centra Health's Johnson Health Center (left to right): Dr. Peter Houck (Medical Director of Johnson Health Center), Joanne Greene (Outreach Coordinator), Governor Mark R. Warner, and Janet Brust (Outreach Enrollment Assistant).



Project Connect

By Kim McGaughey,
Virginia Health Care
Foundation



Recently the Virginia Department of Medical Assistance Services (DMAS) committed to continue its investment in the *Project Connect* initiative managed by the Virginia Health Care Foundation during fiscal year 2004. These funds will be targeted to continue existing projects that are serving areas with high numbers of uninsured children effectively. Some of these projects will be expanded geographically to serve neighboring high need localities. In addition, the funds will be used to establish two new 18 month projects in the Eastern Shore (Accomack/Northampton) and Petersburg/Hopewell/Prince George areas. VHCF recently announced a *Special Call for Proposals* for organizations that want to help enroll children in FAMIS and Medicaid in these two areas.

With the anticipated expansion, *Project Connect* localities will include over 65% of the remaining eligible uninsured children. While the projects can not personally help enroll all of these children, they have demonstrated a solid track record of outreach and enrollment expertise. To date, *Project Connect* has helped enroll over 13,775 children statewide. In addition, many of the projects report positive working relationships with their local Department of Social Services and active referral networks with community organizations, healthcare providers, and school systems. The projects will continue to play a critical role in identifying necessary program and policy improvements at the state level. And they will help institutionalize outreach and enrollment activities within organizations in their communities.

Stay tuned for the exciting future of *Project Connect*...

Did you know?

Following are some new information and clarifications to the FAMIS and Medicaid programs.

New Category of Alien Children Eligible

April 1st, DMAS announced an additional group of resident alien children that is eligible to receive FAMIS if their family qualifies financially. "Victims of Trafficking" is the new category and these children are eligible for FAMIS for their first 7 years of residency in the United States.

SSI Recipients Counted Differently in Medicaid and FAMIS

People receiving SSI benefits are counted in the family size when determining eligibility for FAMIS. They are not counted in family size when determining Medicaid eligibility. Their income is not counted for either program.

New Materials Being Developed

The Department of Medical Assistance Services is in the process of changing the marketing materials for Virginia's child health insurance programs - FAMIS and Medicaid (soon to be called "FAMIS Plus"). With their new marketing firm, Ogilvy Public Relations Worldwide, DMAS is working on updating the look of the joint application, brochures, and posters. Keep an eye out for these new materials coming this summer.

Sentara Leaves Fredericksburg

As of June 1st, Sentara will no longer serve as a Managed Care Organization (MCO) for Medicaid and FAMIS in the Fredericksburg Area (Fredericksburg and the counties of King George, Spotsylvania, and Stafford). This decision was made after an extensive and careful review. Exiting the region supports Sentara's business strategy to centralize its presence within the areas of long-established provider relationships and areas in which the commercial health plan has existing membership base. Current Medicaid and FAMIS recipients in the Sentara Family Care MCO were sent a letter on March 17th informing them of this change and the opportunity to choose one of the remaining MCO's that still serve the area - Anthem Healthkeepers, Virginia Premier, and CareNet.



Permanent Plastic Fee-For-Service Cards Issued in Early July

In July, DMAS is replacing the monthly "paper card" issued to fee-for-service Medicaid and FAMIS recipients with a permanent plastic swipe card. The white plastic card is imprinted with the seal and a map of Virginia, the words "Commonwealth of Virginia" and "Department of Medical Assistance Services", and the recipient's name, 12-digit ID number, and Date of Birth in blue ink. Each recipient will be issued their own card. If you work with fee-for-service clients who are used to getting the paper card every month, please help them understand the new system - one plastic card for use during their entire eligibility period. Replacement cards may be ordered, if needed, from the local DSS or from the FAMIS CPU.

The new plastic ID card is a key to use in verifying eligibility, just having it does not ensure the holder is currently eligible. The provider must verify eligibility each time medical services are rendered by calling a toll-free voice response system, using an Internet-based verification tool, or contacting a private vendor who offers verification services and providing the recipients 12 digit ID number. All verification methods will return the most up-to-date information on file. *(The information for this article was provided by the Virginia Department of Medical Assistance Services.)*

Mailing List Maintenance

Have your addresses changed? Many exciting things will be happening with regard to Child Health Insurance in the near future and we want to make sure that we can reach you. Please update your mailing and/or e-mail addresses if these have changed. Also, if you receive copies of this newsletter for people who no longer work at your office, please contact SignUpNow by calling (804) 828-6062 or e-mailing signupnow@vhcf.org to update your information.

GA Results

Continued from front cover



The Budget Bill

In addition, changes to the programs were made in the Budget Bill (Items 324 and 325). The budget includes funding for the policy changes described above, adds coverage of certain services for children in special education, and implements pre-authorization protocols in FAMIS and Medicaid. Pre-authorization will now be required:

- For prescription drugs when more than 9 unique prescriptions have been prescribed within a 180 day period.

- For more than 5 home health visits and 5 outpatient rehabilitation service visits each year (does not apply to school-based rehabilitation)
 - For more than 5 outpatient psychiatric visits
 - For MRI, CAT Scans and PET Scans
- Budget language also directs DMAS to collect data and report on all these new pre-authorization requirements.

The changes above will take effect on August 1, 2003 to coincide with the final regulations for the FAMIS program.

Thanks...

To Our VCKF Partners

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To SignUpNow's Partners

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