

SignUpNow



Outreach

Communities Connecting Kids With Health Coverage

Update from the Virginia Department of Medical Assistance Services

By Linda Nablo, Director, Division of Maternal & Child Health, Virginia Department of Medical Assistance Services



New FAMIS Materials

New FAMIS materials are now available! The new FAMIS brochure and poster featuring the new FAMIS spokesperson, Julia, are available in both English and Spanish. The joint application for FAMIS/FAMIS Plus/Medicaid for Pregnant Women and FAMIS MOMS is also in stock in English and Spanish. A brochure regarding the new FAMIS *Select* program can now be ordered as well.

You can access the materials order form and view the materials available on the FAMIS website at www.famis.org. Go to the "Partners and Professionals" site menu on the bottom right hand side of the page and click on the "Materials" page. Materials can also be ordered by calling Commonwealth Martin at (804) 780-0076 or faxing an order form to (804) 780-0198.

On-line Application in Spanish

The on-line application is now available in Spanish as well as English. The application can be used for enrollment into all four programs: FAMIS, FAMIS Plus (*children's Medicaid*), FAMIS MOMS, and Medicaid for Pregnant Women. Families can submit a Spanish application directly to the FAMIS CPU using the FAMIS website, www.famis.org. This application can be a useful tool to community health workers, lay health promoters, and others assisting Spanish speaking families to enroll.

Enrollment Progress

Since Governor Warner took office in January 2002, over 138,000 Virginia

children have been enrolled into FAMIS and FAMIS Plus. As of December 1, 2005, FAMIS Plus covers 347,737 children and FAMIS covers an additional 76,018.

As of December, the new FAMIS MOMS program has provided health care coverage to 203 pregnant women since its implementation in August. Early analysis indicates that the majority of the women have enrolled in their second trimester.

Currently 150 children are enrolled in our premium assistance program – FAMIS *Select*. This represents over 50% growth in enrollment in just over four months! This program allows parents to cover their children through an employer's insurance plan (*or private plan*) and receive reimbursement of the premium up to \$100 per child per month.



Children's Health Insurance Program Advisory Committee

In 2004, the Virginia General Assembly passed legislation that revised the name, purpose, membership, and responsibilities of the FAMIS Outreach Oversight Committee, thus creating the Child Health Insurance Program Advisory Committee (*CHIPAC*). According to the legislation, CHIPAC will "assess the policies, operations, and outreach efforts for FAMIS and FAMIS Plus and evaluate enrollment, utilization of services, and the health outcomes of children eligible for such programs...The Committee may report on the current status of FAMIS and FAMIS Plus and make recommendations...

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DMAS Update

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to the Director of the Department of Medical Assistance Services and the Secretary of Health and Human Resources.”

The Committee held a successful planning retreat in September and had a follow-up meeting in early December. At these meetings, the committee accomplished four major tasks:

- **Developed a Mission statement:**

The mission of CHIPAC is to advise the Director of DMAS and the Secretary of Health and Human Resources on ways to optimize the efficiency and effectiveness of DMAS programs to address the health needs of children.

- **Elected Officers:**

Chair - Judith Cash, *Virginia Health Care Foundation*

Vice-Chair - Jill Hanken, *Virginia Poverty Law Center*

- **Drafted Bylaws:**

A subcommittee of CHIPAC presented a draft of bylaws to govern the committee, with particular attention to membership, organizational structure, meetings, and reporting. These bylaws will be reviewed and members will vote on their acceptance at the March meeting.

- **Identified Priority Issues:**

A second subcommittee identified a number of potential issues for the committee’s focus. After discussion of each, the committee identified three

focus areas for 2006: Retention/ Renewal of FAMIS/FAMIS Plus; Access to Care; and Utilization of Health Care Services.

The next meeting of CHIPAC will be held on March 9. Time and location of the meeting will be posted on the FAMIS website and the public is welcome to attend.

Special Training Events

Plans are currently underway for a series of eight special seminars on the FAMIS/ FAMIS Plus programs for local DSS Eligibility Workers. The seminars will be held in different regions throughout the state and are tentatively scheduled for April and early May. The special training events are designed to acknowledge the important role of eligibility workers and review FAMIS/ FAMIS Plus policies and strategies. More detailed information will be going out to Eligibility Workers in February.

DMAS, with funding from the Virginia Department of Health, is sponsoring a series of special SignUpNow workshops for the business community. These sessions are about an hour in length and are geared to HR/benefits professionals, small business owners, health insurance brokers, and others in the business community interested in additional health insurance options for their employees. Please contact Joanne Greene at (434) 851-1376 or Joanne@vhcf.org if you have contacts in the business community who may be interested in attending a session.



SignUpNow Corner

Want to attend a SignUpNow FAMIS workshop? Check out the training calendar at: www.signupnowva.org/calendar.asp.

Need to update your SignUpNow Tool Kit? The entire contents of the latest version of the Tool Kit is now available on-line at: www.signupnowva.org/toolkit.asp.

Did you know?

New information and clarifications to the FAMIS and FAMIS Plus programs.

Source:
VA Department of
Medical Assistance
Services

UNICARE and Anthem

On January 1, 2006 UNICARE Health Plan of Virginia, Inc. will merge with Anthem Healthkeepers, Inc. Medicaid/FAMIS Plus/FAMIS recipients with UNICARE will be switched to Anthem Healthkeepers Plus effective January 1, 2006.

Localities affected by this change are the counties of: Albemarle, Arlington, Buckingham, Fairfax, Fauquier, Greene, Fluvanna, Loudoun, Louisa, Madison, Nelson, Orange, and Prince William; and the cities of: Alexandria, Charlottesville, Fairfax, Falls Church, Manassas, and Manassas Park.

In these localities, FAMIS/FAMIS Plus recipients with UNICARE will be sent information from Anthem, including an Anthem member ID card, a provider directory, and a member handbook. If FAMIS/FAMIS Plus recipients have any questions regarding the Anthem Healthkeepers Plus benefits, they may call Anthem's Member Services Department at (800) 901-0020.

Families should check and see if their current providers accept Anthem

Healthkeepers Plus. If they do, after the switch they can still see their old providers. If they do not, the family may want to see what other managed care organization (MCO), if any, the providers participate in. If the doctor does participate with another FAMIS/FAMIS Plus MCO the family may switch to that MCO. If they do not, the family will have to choose a different provider within their new MCO of choice.

For the former UNICARE recipients in these affected localities, if a **FAMIS Plus** recipient decides that they do not want to have Anthem as MCO, they may change to another MCO participating in their area by calling the Managed Care HelpLine at (800) 643-2273 before March 31, 2006.

If the **FAMIS** recipient decides that they do not want to have Anthem as their MCO, they may change to another MCO serving their area by calling the FAMIS Central Processing Unit at (866) 873-2647 before March 31, 2006.

VHCF Staffing Changes

Judith Cash has been promoted to Deputy Director of the Virginia Health Care Foundation. In addition to her duties overseeing all the program areas at the Foundation, she will retain her oversight of the Child Health Insurance Initiatives.

Kim Bemberis has been promoted to Director of Administration and Technology for the Foundation and will be phasing out of many of her child health duties over the next six months. She will still be working with the *SignUpNow* project.

Joanne Greene, formerly the Program Manager for *Project Connect* and trainer for *SignUpNow*, has now become the Program Manager for all the Child Health Insurance Initiatives at the Foundation, including *SignUpNow*.

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 seven 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. The Coalition 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 2006, the Coalition has adopted the following platform:**

Increasing Eligibility for Pregnant Women

The Coalition hopes to improve access to prenatal care for low income women by raising eligibility levels to 200% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL). Current eligibility for pregnant women is set at 150% FPL. By expanding coverage, Virginia would avoid indigent care costs as well as the enormous costs associated with poor birth outcomes from lack of appropriate prenatal care. A woman who does not receive prenatal care is three times more likely to deliver a low birth weight baby and hospital charges for severe premature/low birth weight babies are sixty times more than for an uncomplicated birth.

Prenatal care is extremely cost effective. Thirty-seven states have recognized this reality and have higher eligibility levels than Virginia. Last year's general assembly raised the level from 133% to 150% of poverty.

Increasing Medicaid/FAMIS Reimbursement for Pediatric Services

The Coalition will be seeking an increase in FAMIS/FAMIS Plus reimbursement rates for pediatric services. Because reimbursement rates for pediatric services

have eroded over time, pediatricians across Virginia are restricting their FAMIS/Medicaid practices. A significant number of Virginia pediatricians are not accepting new Medicaid/FAMIS patients.

In 2005, the General Assembly increased pediatric rates by approximately 10% for a two-month period beginning in May 2006. Funding is needed to maintain this increase and to further increase rates to about 85% of the comparable Medicare rate.

Enhance Medical Workforce Training in Children's Behavioral Health

Approximately 70% of Virginia's children with mental health problems do not receive the treatment they need. Children with untreated mental disorders are at higher risk for school failure, dropping out, violence, drug abuse, suicide and criminal activity. While Medicaid/FAMIS include coverage for behavioral health services, there are not enough qualified providers throughout Virginia to provide those services.

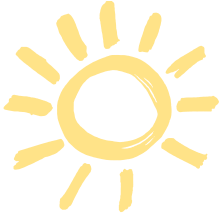
To address this problem, Virginia should provide funding to support fellowships for child psychiatrists and psychologists who commit to work in Virginia and train other health care professionals in evidence-based practices in children's behavioral health.

Support Community-Based, Case Management Programs for At-Risk Pregnant Women and Children

Case management helps at-risk pregnant women and children utilize necessary health services through FAMIS/FAMIS-Plus/Medicaid in a timely and appropriate manner. CHIP of Virginia (*Comprehensive Health Investment Program*) and the Resource Mothers Program are successful programs that help pregnant women and children access primary and preventive care. Funding is needed to expand capacity of these services.

More Information -
For a history of the
**Virginia Coalition for
Children's Health** go
to the SignUpNow
Website at:

[www.signupnowva.org/
coal.asp](http://www.signupnowva.org/coal.asp)



Evaluate a “Buy-In” Program to Allow Higher-Income Children to Purchase FAMIS/FAMIS Plus Health Insurance

Children in Virginia who have family income above 200% poverty are ineligible for FAMIS, even if they are uninsured or underinsured. This is especially problematic for children with severe disabilities (*physical and mental*) who cannot afford necessary health services. Parents who are desperate to find ways to find care for their children may actually give up custody to the state so the child can obtain services through Medicaid.

Remember - You, as an individual, can also contact your legislators to support these important issues.

A “Buy-In” program could offer families an opportunity to purchase health insurance from the state. The Family Opportunity Act, pending in Congress, would create a new federal option, allowing states to create “buy-in” programs, but several states are considering this model under waiver options. Virginia should study a “Buy-In” program for children.

Promote the Value and Improve the Financial Sustainability of Virginia’s Health Insurance Programs for Children

Health care reform is a pressing topic at both the state and federal levels. We believe these discussions should be guided by the following principles:

- Health care is a priority and a core function of government.
- There are numerous ways to strengthen and improve Virginia’s health care programs without harming beneficiaries.
- Programs must be adequately funded.

Does Your Organization Want to Join?

To join VCCH to help advocate for these critical issues, send an e-mail to Jill Hanken at jill@vplc.org
Please include the following information:

The Statement:

“The Following Organization Supports the 2006 Platform of the Virginia Coalition for Children’s Health and Authorizes Participation as a Member Organization.”

Organization Name:

Contact Person:

Address:

Phone:

FAX:

E-Mail(s):

Name and Title of Person Authorizing Participation :

Also, please include any special Instructions for making contact during the General Assembly Session.

Two New Dental Clinics Open

By
 Julia Kindred,
 Outreach Coordinator
*United Way Thomas
 Jefferson Area*
 and
 Joanne Greene,
 Program Manager,
 Children's Health
 Initiatives
*Virginia Health Care
 Foundation*

To Schedule an Appointment Call:

**Community Children's
 Dental Center
 (434) 293-9300**

**James River
 Dental Clinic
 (434) 847-4691**



Smiles For Children
Improving Dental Care Across Virginia

Virginia has done exceptionally well with enrolling children into the FAMIS/FAMIS Plus programs, but enrollment is only the first step in the continuum of care. Access to available health services is critical to good health. In many areas of Virginia, access to dental care has been a problem, especially for recipients of state-sponsored insurance.

To help remedy this situation, the Virginia Health Care Foundation has granted funds to two new dental clinics, which serve FAMIS/FAMIS Plus children.

Charlottesville Area

Charlottesville Area Dental Access (CADA), a new nonprofit agency, opened the **Community Children's Dental Center** on September 6, 2005. Created with a mission to improve the health and well-being of underserved children by providing quality dental care, the Center sees children with FAMIS/FAMIS Plus up to age 19 from the greater Charlottesville area.

The Center was created through the efforts of dentists, physicians, and community agencies, after dental care was identified as an urgent need for families eligible for one of the FAMIS child health programs. This group formed CADA which serves as the board for the center.

In its first 14 weeks of operation, the Dental Center has seen 512 children with 758 appointments and has provided 2,855 procedures. These procedures have included cleanings, extractions, fillings, and several emergency appointments.

Amherst County Area

It was common knowledge that there was just one "Medicaid" dentist in the greater Lynchburg area and children enrolled in state-sponsored insurance were having trouble getting dental care. Johnson Health Center (JHC), recognizing that dental health and general health are not separate entities but integrally related, decided to address the issue.

On July 1, 2005, JHC expanded its services to open the **James River Dental Clinic (JRDC)**, a collaborative effort of Centra Health, JHC and the Central Virginia Health District. Located in Madison Heights, the clinic provides dental services to medically underserved families in Amherst, Appomattox, Bedford Counties, and in the City of Lynchburg. The clinic also seeks to assist the Hispanic community and HIV positive patients. Its mission is to promote oral health, to improve oral health disparities and to improve overall quality of life for lower income families in its target area.

Staffed by one full time dentist and a dental hygienist, JRDC seeks to serve 3,000 individuals during its first year of operation. In its first five months, the clinic has served more than 1,066 patients (about 710 of whom are children).

The James River Dental Clinic provides dental exams, extractions, cleanings, fluoride treatments, cleanings, sealants, x-rays and related oral health services.



Smiles For Children Update

On July 1, 2005, the new Smiles For Children program began delivering dental services to FAMIS/FAMIS Plus and Medicaid children. Doral Dental, the new contractor, was charged with increasing access to dental care and attracting new dental providers through its enhanced services - streamlined operations, timely claim payments and prompt eligibility verification. As of December 1st, 108 new dentists have joined the network of providers and Doral is continuing to work hard to recruit participating dentists around the Commonwealth. To help families find a dentist, DMAS has posted a **Smiles For Children Dental Provider Directory** and a "**Locate A Dentist**" search by zip code at <http://www.dmas.virginia.gov/dental-home.htm>. Families may also call Doral toll free at (888) 912-3456 to locate a provider.

It's Up to You Now!

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

Virginia has made great strides in enrolling eligible children in state-sponsored health insurance. More than 138,000 children have been enrolled in the last four years! Much of the credit for this goes to the energetic outreach workers who have provided one-to-one assistance to help families enroll their children. But, they can't continue to do this work alone. Everyone who works with children should share in the commitment to ensure that every eligible child has health insurance. For this reason, 2005 has been referred to as the "Year of Institutionalization." Policy and practice changes, training opportunities, and partnerships have all been implemented to help us to institutionalize enrollment assistance in communities.

Health Settings

With the help of a "Mini-SUN" presentation created by *SignUpNow* (SUN), outreach workers around Virginia are training small groups of primary care providers and office staff to identify, screen and provide enrollment assistance to uninsured pediatric and pregnant patients.

Several of the local health departments across the state are using a new feature of their WebVision patient registration system to assist families with a FAMIS application. This enhancement enables health department staff to use family information they have already gathered to populate a health insurance application for children and pregnant women. The health department worker may then take just a few extra minutes to help the family complete the application. Congratulations to the Virginia Department of Health and the Virginia Department of Medical Assistance Services for working together to create another door through which children can be enrolled in health insurance!

Community Organizations and Schools

Community-based organizations and schools are rising to the institutionalization challenge as well. Many outreach workers

from Healthy Families, CHIP Programs, Resource Mothers and other community based organizations have participated in SUN trainings, and are ready to move from being referral partners to actively helping families with applications. Head Start workers have led the way by including FAMIS screening and application assistance as a part of their intake process.

Schools across Virginia have actively participated in FAMIS outreach by distributing FAMIS flyers during Back-to-School registration, at report card times, or in home work folders. More and more school nurses participate in SUN training, ready and willing to take on the task of enrollment assistance for the remaining uninsured children.

Employer Outreach

Outreach at the workplace seems to be the final frontier, and perhaps the most challenging. The new FAMIS *Select* component of FAMIS has proven to be a great asset to the business sector. With FAMIS *Select*, the parents of FAMIS enrolled children may be reimbursed for covering their children in the employer sponsored health insurance plan. To promote FAMIS Programs in the business sector, *SignUpNow* created a new presentation designed specifically for employers and human resources personnel. *SignUpNow* plans to conduct several of these presentations this winter and spring. Check the website for a Human Resource SUN presentation near you (www.signupnowva.org/calendar.asp). You can help *SignUpNow* by informing your business contacts about these special presentations!

Virginia has done a wonderful job enrolling children in health insurance. Now it's up to you, our community partners, to keep enrollment numbers high by instituting FAMIS screening and enrollment assistance as part of your routine. We are depending on you, but more importantly, uninsured children and their families are depending upon you.



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mailing signupnow@vhcf.org.

Thanks...



To Our VA CKF Partners

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To SignUpNow's Partners

Virginia Department of Medical Assistance Services and the Virginia Primary Care Association.

Cover The Uninsured Week

May 1 - May 7, 2006

Planning an outreach event?

Why not have it during *Cover the Uninsured Week*?

Stay tuned for more information in the coming months...

