

Informing Virginians of their Health Care Options

Reaching more Virginians through Cover Virginia

Importance to Virginians

As evidenced by last fall's federal open enrollment period, applying for health coverage can prove a complex, even overwhelming, experience. People often experienced significant delays when they applied to programs for which they were not eligible. As a state, Virginia wants to ensure that people obtain coverage as expeditiously as possible. The application process is made much simpler if Virginians are guided to the right coverage option for them initially. This expedites processing of applications and makes the process move as smoothly as possible. To meet this need, Virginia is relaunching the central resource that helps individuals identify the health insurance program for which they are most likely to be eligible: the Cover Virginia website (coverva.org), as well as an accompanying call center.

Goal

Cover Virginia is currently a helpful source of information for uninsured Virginians seeking access to health care coverage. With such great unmet need in the Commonwealth, however, Virginia is making significant enhancements to the website to make it even more user-friendly and approachable. Virginia will ensure that the Cover Virginia website contains the most relevant health care information for Virginians, including the full range of options for those seeking coverage and services, and helps direct individuals to apply for their best coverage option.

Issue Background

Virginia launched the Cover Virginia website in October 2013. It offers basic information about FAMIS and Medicaid programs as well as resources for individuals trying to navigate all the new options available through the Affordable Care Act. Since the website launched, more than 220,000 visitors have accessed the site. In 2014, the number of visits per week increased to nearly 5,000. Many Virginians who could benefit from the information on the website, however, remain unaware of this resource.

Strategies for Success

In order to make it easier for Virginians to connect with the programs and services for which they qualify, the Commonwealth will provide additional education and links on the coverva.org website for the following insurance options:

A Healthy Virginia

- **Federal Health Insurance Marketplace.** The website will include direct access to the Federal Marketplace to expedite enrollment during the second open enrollment.
- **Department of Veterans Affairs.** The website will include information for veterans about available health benefits and how they can sign up for VA health care if they qualify.
- **The Virginia Chamber of Commerce's Virginia Benefits Market.** Coverva.org will promote other health insurance options, including the Virginia Chamber of Commerce's new private health insurance marketplace, the Virginia Benefits Market. This insurance exchange will allow small businesses to offer a menu of health and other benefits to their employees.
- **CommonHelp (www.commonhelp.virginia.gov).** The website will direct Virginians interested in applying for Medicaid, FAMIS, and other public benefits to the streamlined, online application found on CommonHelp.

To best serve Virginians, the following enhancements to the site will be completed before the next Federal Marketplace open enrollment, beginning November 15, 2014.

- Develop an enhanced eligibility calculator to help users find the right health programs for themselves and their families.
- Provide prominent links on the Cover Virginia home page to guide users toward the appropriate health care programs for children and youth, adults, pregnant women, veterans and business owners.
- Include a prominent link to resources for one-on-one assistance for individuals needing help with applications.

Timeline

The initiatives mentioned above will be implemented by the November 15, 2014, open enrollment start date.

Measures of Achievement

Marketing and outreach staff at DMAS will use Google Analytics tools to monitor the online access habits of visitors to the Cover Virginia website. To measure the success of the enhancements, staff will set up analytics to measure the number of individual hits for websites including the Federal Marketplace, CommonHelp, Department of Veterans Affairs, and the Chamber's Virginia Benefits Market.