

# Project Connect

Connecting Children and Pregnant Women  
to Virginia's Medicaid and CHIP Programs

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National Children's Health Insurance Summit  
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# Virginia Health Care Foundation (VHCF)

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- VHCF is a public/private partnership established in 1992.
- VHCF helps uninsured Virginians and those who live in underserved communities receive medical, dental and mental health care.
- VHCF support helps free clinics, community health centers and others to expand both the types of care offered and the number of patients cared for each year.

# VHCF –Meeting Our Mission

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- Grantmaking
- Programmatic Initiatives
- Establish and Support Relevant and Effective Statewide Initiatives
- Health Policy Development

# VHCF Children's Health Insurance Outreach Initiatives

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# Project Connect History

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- In 1999, VHCF awarded \$1 million in private funds to 12 grantees for 18-month grants.
- Targeted 47 localities and helped to enroll 5,508 children.
- Success of the projects did not go unnoticed.
- VHCF entered into contract with Department of Medical Assistance Services (DMAS) in 2001 to fund outreach workers and SignUpNow trainings and Took Kit.
- Lead applicant for Covering Kids & Families grant from Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (2002-2006) funding additional outreach work

# Project Connect Today

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- Receives funding from:
  - VA Department of Medical Assistance Services
  - Danville Regional Foundation (2009 – present)
  - Anthem (Wellpoint Foundation 2008 – 2012)
  - Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services (CMS – CHIPRA Cycle I 2009-2011)
- Currently funds 16 ORWs across the state covering 34 localities.

# Children's Health Insurance Outreach Initiatives

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- Project Connect
  - Provides grants for local outreach
  - Holds Quarterly Outreach Meetings
  - Hosts a list-serv for those who help families apply for health insurance for children and pregnant women
- SignUpNow
  - Conducts Trainings (in-person and on-line)
  - Develops quarterly newsletters
  - Tool Kit
- Serves as the “eyes and ears” on the ground to provide feedback to state agencies that run the FAMIS programs regarding policy and procedures
- Helps develop and implement policy

# Project Connect Results

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- Outreach Workers have helped to enroll over 57,600 children and pregnant women since 1999.
- In FY 2011, PC Outreach Workers:
  - Enrolled 4900 children;
  - Enrolled 897 pregnant women;
  - Renewed coverage for 1,896 children.
- In FY 2011, the value of Project Connect grants was \$594,923.
- In FY 2011, 24 FTEs were funded.



# School-Based Outreach Strategies

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# Where are the PC Outreach Workers Located?

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All Project Connect Outreach Workers partner with schools, even though they are employed by various types of organizations:

- Community Action Organizations
- Federally Qualified Health Centers
- Health Departments
- Hospital Systems
- Universities
- Head Start
- School Systems

# Getting the Lay of the Land

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- Understand what type of school-based outreach is done at the state-level.
- Understand the hierarchy within the Department of Education and individual school districts. (Virginia is state-regulated, but locally administered.)
- Meet with the Superintendent to obtain buy-in and key contacts.
- Ask to get on the agenda at the next Principal's meeting.

# Getting the Lay of the Land

(Continued)

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- Ask if the Superintendent is willing to sign an agreement to:
  - Share data; and/or
  - Outline who will take on what responsibilities
- Develop relationships.
- Determine if the emergency cards have a question about insurance and if all schools within the district use them.
- Prioritize schools you want to target.

# School-Based Outreach

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- Utilize DMAS Back-to-School flyers (customized).
  - Back-to-School flyers
  - Kindergarten flyers
  - Free and Reduced Lunch flyers
- Participate in Back-to-School nights.
- Work with staff at registration centers and/or registrars.

# School-Based Outreach (Continued)

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- Participate in immunization and free physical events.
- Review emergency forms (if applicable) and follow-up with families who indicate their child is uninsured.
- Send letters to families from Superintendents/Principals.
- Provide articles to be placed in newsletters and ads to be used on Web pages and school lunch menus.

# School-Based Outreach (Continued)

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- Work with coaches at the beginning of each sports season to identify student athletes who may be uninsured.
- Educate key school-based personnel including superintendents, principals, school nurses, guidance counselors, social workers, and nutrition staff about FAMIS.
- Work with Public Relations staff to determine other ways to get information out about FAMIS.

# School-Based Outreach (Continued)

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- Educate PTA/PTOs and engage them in outreach.
- Speak to ESL and Adult Education class members.
- Participate in T-dap clinics.
- Work with after-school contacts.
- Work with school division staff whose children might be eligible.



# Barriers to School-Based Outreach

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- The ability to share information between the schools and the outreach workers regarding insurance status of students.
  - MOUs
  - Contracts with School Systems
  - Hire Outreach Workers through School Systems
- Many schools in a locality and usually one outreach worker (sometimes two).
- School districts and, within them, individual schools do things differently.
- Many competing priorities for school personnel.

# What Have We Learned?

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- Every community is different. What works in one locality may not work in another.
- Every school is different. What works in one school may not work in another.
- Use leadership from each organization to start the conversation.
- Partnerships make you stronger.
- Track your referral sources within the schools and provide them with feedback on a regular basis.

# What Have We Learned?

(Continued)

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- You CAN conduct successful school-based outreach without having access to confidential/protected information, but it may take longer.
- Repetition is important.
- Your best referral sources are happy families who had a good experience working with you.

# Next Steps with School-Based Outreach

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- Work with DOE to create an MOU template that would allow for the sharing of information.
- Couple MOU template with copy of Sebelius/Duncan letter and promote to schools.
- Continue to work with DMAS and DOE to determine new ways to educate families about the FAMIS programs.

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Thank You!

