

# VERMONT LEGAL AID, INC.

## OFFICE OF HEALTH CARE ADVOCATE

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## HEALTH BENEFIT EXCHANGE UPDATE

**Trinka Kerr**

**State Health Care Advocate**

**January 9, 2014**

### Call Volume

- Assistance requests through our hotline and through our Online Help Request increased 26% for the October – December 2013 quarter over the previous quarter.
- We received 949 requests for assistance, which was the highest call volume ever for a quarter. December's call volume was the highest ever for that month. January's call volume is on pace to be the highest call volume January ever.
- 26% of the requests were related to Vermont Health Connect.

### Common Problems

- Invoice and payment issues
  - Some consumers say they have not received invoices.
  - Premium payment processing times are too long, 7-10 days.
  - Maximus CSRs cannot see if a check has been received.
  - Consumers can mail their checks and then wait two weeks for them to be processed.
  - Some invoices are confusing.
- Communication issues
  - Many consumers cannot wait on hold to get through to the call center because they have limited minutes on their phones.
  - There is no option to leave a message.
  - Consumers are not getting promised callbacks.
  - Consumers are being given inconsistent information.
  - The two computer systems cannot "speak" to each other. CSRs need to know which computer system to look into, ACCESS or Siebel.
- Notices
  - ACCESS is still generating notices, and sometimes they contradict the Siebel notices.
  - Consumers are not getting Notices of Decision, especially about Medicaid.

*The Office of Health Care Advocate, previously named the Office of Health Care Ombudsman, is a special project of Vermont Legal Aid.*

- Lack of written Notices of Decision means consumers are not getting proper legal notice and are not being given our phone number for assistance with appeals.
- Problems for non-citizen legal residents
  - Refugees are being incorrectly denied coverage. (We believe there may be a temporary fix in place for this now.)
  - Legal residents with older green cards without expiration dates cannot complete applications.
- Confusion about ID cards and numbers
  - Many consumers have not gotten their membership cards.
  - Maximus is giving consumers their member ID number.
  - The Health Access Eligibility Unit (HAEU) is telling people they don't have member ID numbers, and to use their SSNs.
  - Green Mountain Care's universal ID numbers is supposed to still work, but we have one case where it does not and the consumer cannot get her medication as a result.

#### Attempts to resolve problems

- Bi-weekly meetings with Maximus
- Contacts with carriers
- Contacts with Health Care Operations and DVHA
- Problems with HAEU
- Emails to VHC
- Letters to VHC