

VERMONT LEGAL AID, INC.

OFFICE OF HEALTH CARE ADVOCATE

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Health Benefits Exchange Update

Trinka Kerr

Health Care Advocate

January 30, 2014

Call Volume

As of 4:00 p.m. 1/29/14, the HCA had received 373 calls for January 2014. This is a 29% increase over the 289 calls we received last January, and a 10 % increase over the 339 for December 2013. And the month is not over yet. It also means that this will be our busiest month ever. The previous record was 341 in October 2012. For comparison purposes, when Medicare Part D started, which also generated many problems in January 2006, we received 313 calls.

	Total Cases	VHC Cases	VHC: % of All
1/1-1/7	88	34	38.6 %
1/8-1/14	92	32	34.7 %
1/15-1/21	75	26	34.6 %
1/22-1/28	101	33	32.6 %
Total	356	125	35.1 %

Wait Times for Vermont Health Connect Call Center (Maximus)

The wait times are improving. We usually do not have to wait when we call on the assistor line and clients are not mentioning wait times as often.

Common Reasons for VHC Calls

- Confusion over insurance status
- Conflicting information from VHC
- Denials or incorrect Premium Tax Credits due to eligibility mistakes
 - Incorrect inclusion of income
 - Incorrect household member
- Invoice problems
 - February invoices did not go out until January 15, ten days late
 - Some people say they have not received invoices

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

- Processing delays
- Partial payment problems
- Incorrect start dates for coverage
- Delays in sending enrollment files to carriers
- Application processing delays despite urgent medical need
- Lack of ID numbers for Medicaid
- Refugees denied due to lack of citizenship
- Difficulty switching or dropping plans if enrolled in an inappropriate plan
- Change of circumstance not technically possible
- Health Access Eligibility Unit (HAEU) cannot change codes so must send requests to Computer Operations (COPS)
- Back log at COPS
- As far as we know, Notices of Decision are still not going out.
- HAEU doesn't always call us back.