

LAWRENCE MILLER
Chief of Health Care Reform



State of Vermont
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

TO: HCHC, SCHW, SCF, HROC, JFC
FROM: Lawrence Miller, Chief of Health Care Reform
Date: December 31, 2015
RE: Vermont Health Connect Monthly Report

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Lawrence Miller".

I am pleased to submit the eighth monthly report in conformance with Section C.106 of the budget bill.

This report serves as the re-cap of key operational and enrollment metrics for November. In order to provide the most up-to-date information available, it also covers project development work through December 16.

As 2015 draws to a close, I am grateful for all that our state staff, contractors, and partners accomplished this past year and am cognizant of the work that awaits in the year ahead. The first step in that work will be done by a core group of people working the New Year's Day state holiday and the following weekend to execute the year end processing and testing that is necessary to begin regular operations in the new plan year. People can expect the front end of the VHC website to be closed to outside users and the customer service center to be closed for the 3 day weekend. This is the first time the year end processing routine will be executed on the live data. Last year relied on a different process. If any anomalies are identified the maintenance window may be extended until there is full confidence that the closing process has been successfully completed and the database is ready for 2016 transactions.

On the renewal front, I am grateful that we were able to avoid major contingencies and that, for most customers, this year's open enrollment process was night-and-day better than last year. At the same time, more must be done to improve the user experience for those customers who encounter problems. The scale of this challenge is manageable, especially when compared to the million customers who were in queue with the federal exchange as the first open enrollment deadline approached, and we owe it to all Vermonters. The increased automation that we have achieved needs to be followed by continual improvements in integration with our billing and carrier partners. This has been, and continues to be, a top priority for us.

I'm grateful that our federal partners approved our plan for Medicaid redeterminations on December 15. We are proceeding with redeterminations for 9,000 MAGI Medicaid households per month from our legacy system (ACCESS) from January through April, transitioning those customers who qualify for Medicaid or qualified health plans into the Vermont Health Connect system. This effort will be followed by monthly redeterminations from May through October for 9,000 MAGI Medicaid households that are

already in the Vermont Health Connect system. Redeterminations for Medicaid for the Aged, Blind and Disabled (MABD) customers began in November and will continue into 2016 at a pace of 1,000 households per month.

On the project development side, we are conducting rigorous User Acceptance Testing on our next planned release and will schedule a deployment date as soon as that testing is complete. We will continue to manage scope by breaking upgrades into multiple smaller releases as appropriate.

On the health insurance literacy side, I am pleased that our new Plan Comparison Tool is receiving positive reviews. This interactive online resource is helping Vermonters understand their subsidies and assess how various plan designs and out-of-pocket costs could impact their total health care costs.

With just over a month remaining in Open Enrollment, I invite you and your colleagues to join Vermont Health Connect and its partners in reaching out to Vermonters who need insurance. Vermont has achieved one of the lowest uninsured rates in the country, yet still one out of every 30 of our neighbors lacks the peace of mind that comes from health insurance. It's important for us to continue to communicate that financial help is available to lower costs – and that the federal fee for not having insurance is going up in 2016. In fact, many Vermonters will find it cheaper to buy insurance through Vermont Health Connect than to pay the federal fee.

By helping Vermonters take control of their health insurance plan assessment and selection, we can help them feel confident that their plan selection is the right one for their family. We can rebuild their confidence in the ability of Vermont Health Connect and its partners to provide quality customer service. And we can take another step toward quality coverage for all Vermonters.

Here's to 2016!