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**Our message to families around Virginia is simple...**

# **Sign Up Now!**

SignUpNow, started as a project of the Virginia Coalition for Children's Health, is a private sector initiative of the Virginia Health Care Foundation supporting community-based efforts to increase the enrollment of eligible children and pregnant women in the state's health insurance programs. We do this by providing:

*Workshops and training for thousands of community workers across the Commonwealth*

*Technical assistance to local programs and groups in designing outreach strategies to meet local needs and resources*

*Comprehensive information and helpful resources such as Tool Kits, newsletters, and a web site*

*Coordination and support to a growing network of community workers, health care providers, state-level policy makers, and others concerned with protecting Virginia's children*

*Specific case-by-case assistance and problem solving for local workers helping families*

*Advocacy for program improvements and support for effective local outreach*

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# Welcome to the SignUpNow *Tool Kit*

This *Tool Kit* has been created by SignUpNow to enable workers in a wide variety of community settings to assist families in seeking health insurance for their children. Uninsured children are at risk of not receiving the proper preventive care to stay healthy and grow strong or the appropriate and timely treatment when they are ill. Uninsured pregnant women forgo critical prenatal care due to lack of funds. Their families too often have to make impossible choices about seeking medical care and live in fear that large medical bills will drive the family into poverty.

While having health insurance is not a guarantee that children and pregnant women will receive the best possible care, it is a vital key to accessing the comprehensive health care services they deserve.

Compared to insured children, uninsured children are:

- Up to 10 times less likely to have a regular health care provider
- 4 times more likely to delay seeking care when it is needed
- 5 times more likely to use the emergency room as a regular source of care
- 6 times less likely to fill a prescription because of cost<sup>1</sup>

In addition, an uninsured pregnant woman who does not receive prenatal care is three times more likely to deliver a low birthweight baby. Resulting hospital charges for severely premature/low birthweight babies are sixty times more than for an uncomplicated birth.<sup>2</sup>

Together, the Commonwealth's state-sponsored health insurance programs (FAMIS and FAMIS Plus) make comprehensive health care coverage available to thousands of uninsured children across Virginia at little or no cost to families. Medicaid for Pregnant Women and FAMIS MOMS provide coverage to eligible low-income pregnant women. Unfortunately, many working families still do not know about these programs; or if they do, they do not think the programs apply to them. Some families may require assistance from a known and trusted source in their community to successfully navigate the system.

This *Tool Kit* contains program information, all necessary forms, lists of resources, and specific, helpful guides for working with families. In conjunction with the training provided by SignUpNow at community workshops or via its on-line modules, this manual will equip local workers and their communities to reach out to families and help enroll eligible children and pregnant women in the insurance programs so necessary to their health and development.

Take this *Tool Kit* with you wherever you might find an uninsured child or pregnant woman – that means everywhere! You'll always be ready to lend a helping hand!

<sup>1</sup> *Accessing Health Services: Moving Beyond Enrollment* - Children's Defense Fund

<sup>2</sup> March of Dimes

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