



VERMONT  
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VERMONT HEALTH BENEFIT EXCHANGE

*Outreach and Education Plan*

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# OVERVIEW

*Our vision is a Vermont where everyone has access to quality, affordable, comprehensive health coverage.*

*Our mission is to provide all Vermonters with the knowledge and tools needed to easily compare and choose a quality, affordable and comprehensive health plan.*

Starting on October 1, 2013, Vermonters will have a new opportunity to search for and compare health coverage options in the state and select a plan that best fits their needs and their budget.

The Vermont Health Benefit Exchange (the Exchange) will be a new tool where Vermonters can access quality, affordable health coverage. Individuals, families and small businesses will be able to get coverage through the Exchange, which is called **Vermont Health Connect**.

The Department of Vermont Health Access (DVHA) is responsible for conducting outreach and education to ensure that residents are aware of Vermont Health Connect and informed of the plans available to them. However, the State alone cannot reach all Vermonters. Communicating about Vermont Health Connect will require a coordinated effort among State agencies, community organizations, insurance carriers, corporate partners, providers and many others. This outreach and education plan will guide all activities intended to reach Vermonters and educate them about Vermont Health Connect.

This plan includes the following:

- Specified audiences, core strategies and milestones to guide all outreach and education efforts; and
- Plans for outreach and education that will increase awareness of and educate Vermonters about Vermont Health Connect. This includes materials development, earned media, paid media, social media, stakeholder engagement, community outreach and state employee communications.

This plan has been informed by stakeholder input and a robust research effort conducted with individuals and groups directly affected by Vermont Health Connect, including:

- Interviews with 15 stakeholders, including those representing community organizations, providers, brokers, insurance carriers and consumer advocacy organizations (March 2012);
- Statewide benchmark survey with adults (N=1,004) to gain insights on overall awareness of the Exchange, motivations and barriers for

The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA) requires that states develop an outreach and education plan for populations including individuals, entities with experience in facilitating enrollment, small businesses and their employees, employer groups, health care providers, community-based organizations, advocates for hard-to-reach populations and other relevant populations.

using the Exchange, and trusted messengers and outreach vehicles (March 2012); and

- Eight small focus groups with individuals and small business owners to test messages and language created based on key findings from previous research, including names, taglines, logo, mantra/text and website examples (Burlington and Rutland, June 2012).

The strategies guiding all outreach and education efforts have been established using this research together with the expertise and experience of DVHA staff, lessons learned from previous enrollment efforts, outreach and education best practices, the federal implementation timeline, and clear enrollment goals and audiences.

## AUDIENCES

Vermont Health Connect will allow individuals and families to enroll in private coverage, small businesses to offer coverage to employees, and provide access to public programs to those eligible.

All Vermonters should be made aware of the Exchange – Vermont Health Connect – and its new role in the State’s health care system; raising awareness and demonstrating the value of Vermont Health Connect broadly will help contribute to its success. Though, Vermonters who will enroll through Vermont Health Connect (“Exchange-eligible”) will always be the main focus of outreach and education. Ultimately, the audiences for outreach and education are the individuals, families and small businesses who will be eligible to use Vermont Health Connect.

Defining the audiences of our outreach and education efforts does not define who will or won’t come across information about Vermont Health Connect. Rather, this identifies populations, and sub-populations, that are the focus of these efforts.

A large majority of Vermonters who will enroll through Vermont Health Connect fall under 400% Federal Poverty Level (FPL) – meaning they will be eligible for public programs or financial assistance to help them pay premiums and/or out-of-pocket expenses. This includes approximately<sup>1</sup>:

- 85% of current uninsured population
- 100% of current VHAP beneficiaries
- 86% of current Catamount beneficiaries
- 60% of individuals who currently purchase private insurance

Audiences have been defined as “primary” and “secondary”. Primary audiences are those who will likely be eligible to use Vermont Health

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<sup>1</sup> Current population data collected by the State as of August 2012

Connect when it launches and secondary audiences are those who can help reach and inform primary audiences and whose support is necessary to ensure a successful launch and ongoing enrollment.

### *Primary Audiences*

- **Uninsured and underinsured, Medicaid-eligible individuals and families.** Vermont will proceed with expanding Medicaid to individuals and families earning up to 133 percent of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) and Vermonters eligible for Medicaid will be able to enroll through Vermont Health Connect. Parents of children enrolled in Dr. Dynasaur are outlined as an audience because of their familiarity and connection with state health programs.
- **Uninsured and underinsured, subsidy-eligible individuals and families.** Approximately 40 percent of the uninsured population in Vermont falls between 134 and 400 percent FPL and will therefore be eligible for tax credits.<sup>2</sup>
  - This population includes many **current Catamount and VHAP beneficiaries** who will see a change in their coverage, and will therefore require outreach tailored to their unique circumstances.
- **Young adults.** Forty-four percent of the uninsured population is individuals age 18 to 34.<sup>3</sup> This demographic may be eligible for Medicaid, subsidies, or their parents' health insurance plan. We anticipate this group will include seasonal employees, as many are young adults
- **Parents of school-aged children.** Not only is this audience an avenue to potentially Exchange-eligible parents, but they are also served by channels such as health liaisons in the schools. These liaisons, along with other publically-funded entities, work to educate parents via their children about health coverage options.
- **Small business owners.** This group is the link to educating the small group market. Vermont's insurance market is shifting, meaning that small businesses (50 employees or fewer) can only offer employee sponsored insurance coverage through Vermont Health Connect. There will also be a significant number of employers who will drop coverage and need to educate their employees about the new options available through Vermont Health Connect. Also, those with up to 25 employees who currently offer coverage may be eligible for federal tax credits.

According to the statewide benchmark survey, uninsured, lower literacy, lower income, and younger residents are least aware of Vermont Health Connect. They are also the least interested in using it after hearing a short description.

<sup>2</sup> SHADAC Data Center (Current Population Survey Annual Social and Economic Supplement, 2011)

<sup>3</sup> SHADAC Data Center (Current Population Survey Annual Social and Economic Supplement, 2011)

We expect carriers, advocates, providers and others will conduct outreach to these populations as well.

### *Secondary Audiences*

- **Internal stakeholders**, i.e., state agencies and their employees, will be critical players in carrying out the successful adoption of Vermont Health Connect.
- **External stakeholders** will play a critical role in the success of Vermont Health Connect, particularly with regard to outreach and education to hard-to-reach audiences. Successful implementation will require support from several external stakeholders, including:
  - Insurance carriers
  - Brokers
  - Health care providers
  - Advocates
  - Community organizations
  - Policymakers
  - The business community
  - Media

As Vermont Health Connect’s outreach team, we understand that there may be a desire to “target” all Vermonters; however, our work will be the most successful when we focus priorities to address those with the greatest needs.

## CORE STRATEGIES

Communicating effectively with audiences about a new way to enroll in health insurance will require an innovative, multi-pronged effort that builds from year to year. The following core strategies will inform the implementation of an integrated outreach and education campaign that includes tested messages and is designed to reach audiences through multiple touch points as they go about their daily lives.

- Plan communications “waves” around key moments throughout the year in order to amplify education efforts – such as back-to-school and open enrollment periods – as well as ongoing outreach to amplify messages.
- Highlight the ways Vermonters will get help learning about and enrolling in health coverage such as with call-center and/or in-person assistance support (via Consumer Assister). Research demonstrates that Vermonters want help enrolling in a plan – and they want to feel confident that they will choose the right one.

- Tailor outreach to priority audiences and ensure the campaign is reflective of Vermont's unique identity.
- Place an early focus on audiences most likely to enroll to build momentum and word of mouth about the ease and value of enrolling, without excluding other Vermonters.
- Gear consumer assistance outreach towards hard-to-reach populations who may take longer to reach and enroll.
- Quickly make the benefits of using Vermont Health Connect real by showcasing the stories of people – individuals, families and small business owners – who have had a positive experience with Vermont Health Connect.
- Design innovative, mutually-beneficial partnerships with organizations and businesses to reach audiences in creative ways and build off of existing networks and relationships.
- Develop a core group of stakeholders to inform outreach design and implementation.
- Attune outreach for those without computer or internet access and ensure that all Vermonters can get the information they need to make informed decisions.

### *A Phased Approach*

To help plan for and execute outreach and education, this strategy has been organized by phases that take place starting October 2012 and carrying through December 2014. This approach is meant to give DVHA, Exchange employees and contractors a clear sense of milestones for carrying out each component of the plan.

#### **Phase 1: Plan**

*October 2012 – December 2012*

Outreach and education strategies will be assessed to ensure they align with enrollment and awareness goals. An informational website will be created as an interim resource for those interested in learning more about Vermont Health Connect and keeping up with its development. Public forums will be held to educate Vermonters about upcoming changes and gain the public's insights into the development of Vermont Health Connect.

#### **Phase 2: Prep & Launch**

*January 2013 – September 2013*

Commitments – from media placements to partnerships – will be secured, outreach materials will be created and produced, Consumer Assistants will be trained, and logistics for all outreach and education activities will be finalized. Public forums will continue to be held to educate Vermonters about Vermont Health Connect. By September 2013, Vermont Health Connect will “launch” – meaning the website will be available for Vermonters to log on, view plan options and learn more about enrolling through Vermont Health Connect.

#### **Phase 3: Go**

*October 2013 – March 2014 (open enrollment)*

Vermont Health Connect will be open for business – campaign promotion will be running statewide; the State and partners will be promoting Vermont Health Connect; and Consumer Assistants and partners will be reaching out to Vermonters. All activities will be executed with the goal of increasing awareness of Vermont Health Connect and enrolling Vermonters in health coverage. On January 1, 2014, Exchange plans will go into effect.

#### **Phase 4: Assess**

*April 2014 – September 2014*

In addition to continuing enrollment efforts for Medicaid-eligible populations and those with qualifying events (i.e., can enroll on off times), we will evaluate the value and success of outreach and education conducted in phase 3. At this time, we will assess the successes and gaps in enrollment and lay the groundwork for future enrollment campaigns.

#### **Phase 5: Re-energize**

*October 2014 – December 2014 (open enrollment)*

Much like phase 3, outreach and education will be coordinated and carried out with the benefit of lessons learned from the first round of open enrollment.

While strategies and some materials will likely be relevant beyond 2014, a reassessment will occur so that all future outreach and education efforts align with updated enrollment goals and are executed effectively and efficiently.

## MATERIALS DEVELOPMENT

The development of informational and educational materials, such as posters, flyers, and more, for Vermonters to learn more about the Exchange.

Developing promotional tools and materials that speak to and motivate eligible Vermonters is critical to the success of Vermont Health Connect. A development process that is informed by research and incorporates feedback from appropriate stakeholders will help ensure that materials resonate with audiences and fit the needs of partners, Consumer Assistants and stakeholders.

### WHAT WE'RE TRYING TO ACHIEVE

Though each individual material will have its own purpose depending on its format and audience, the overarching effort to develop materials aims to:

- Raise awareness of upcoming health reforms
- Educate Vermonters about Vermont Health Connect and how they can access coverage
- Supply partners, Consumer Assistants, and stakeholders with resources to conduct outreach and education

### WHO WE'RE TRYING TO REACH

The audience for each material will vary, but materials will be developed with the following audiences in mind:

- All Vermonters
- Exchange-eligible populations (including small businesses)
- Partners and Consumer Assistants conducting outreach and education

### HOW WE'RE GOING TO DO IT

The process for creation, production and dissemination of materials will be detailed in the following plan components:

- Traditional Promotion (Campaign)
- Print
- Online
- Training

- Administrative

## OVERVIEW

All materials will draw from recent learnings in message and visual identity testing. Materials will feature messages that cut across multiple audiences and clear and simple imagery. From posters to training materials and brochures, the materials will feature the same look and feel to ensure consistency and build recognition among audiences.

At the onset of the materials development process, the needs of Consumer Assistants, partners, and stakeholders will be identified, including types of materials, formats, and quantities. This will determine how and when materials are distributed.

The objective of each material will be identified at the onset of its creation. Some materials will serve an awareness-building purpose that simply informs Vermonters of the Exchange (and its URL), while others will be geared towards enrollment. All materials will be created with literacy in mind and, when possible, language will be written at an 8<sup>th</sup> grade reading level or below. Additionally, online materials will be created in a manner that is 508-compliant to ensure that individuals with disabilities have access to the same information and resources.<sup>4</sup>

## TRADITIONAL PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS (CAMPAIGN)

The objective of creating a campaign is to raise awareness of Vermont Health Connect and drive traffic to the website. Materials will be developed in a manner that, creatively and linguistically, gets the message out to Vermonters. This means creating public education materials that are straightforward, concise and, at times, have a clear call-to-action. Materials will be reviewed by the appropriate stakeholders to ensure that they are sensitive to their constituencies and will meet their outreach and education needs. All concepts will be tested through qualitative research with specific audiences to ensure their effectiveness.

The campaign will be executed across the mix of mediums to reach Vermonters across the state (*see Paid Media*). Campaign materials will be created for the sole use of Vermont Health Connect and their distribution will be managed by media buyers. This will ensure message consistency and proper management of creative rights and licensing (voiceover talent, photography, etc.). Materials will include:

- 30-second television pieces
- 15- and 30- second radio spots
- Newspaper print

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<sup>4</sup> This refers to section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended (29 U.S.C. 794d). Section 508 requires that Federal agencies must develop electronic materials that can be accessed, with comparative ease, by employees and members of the public with disabilities.

- Online banners (static and animated)
- Search engine copy
- Facebook promotions

At this time, we are assessing interpretation needs for developing materials in languages other than English. We will work with experts representing refugees—as Burlington, VT is a US Refugee Resettlement city—Native Americans and other groups across the state to ensure adequate outreach is conducted to serve Vermont’s unique cultures and ESL populations.

## PRINTED MATERIALS

The objective of printed materials is to meaningfully promote Vermont Health Connect to Exchange-eligible Vermonters.

Printed materials will likely be a key resource for partners and Consumer Assistors, and their review of, and input in, select materials will ensure their use and efficacy. To help determine printing quantities, we will gauge how partners and Consumer Assistors plan to distribute materials. Printing will be done for the first year only to allow for changes to design, message and approach following the first year round of open enrollment, if necessary.

We will confer with experts and Consumer Assistors to determine what materials need to be re-created in alternate languages and the best way to make those materials accessible, such as making them available online for download. This assessment may determine that resources, such as a phone number or website URL, for non-English speakers should be listed on some or all materials.

Based on past experience with Green Mountain Care and research with eligible Vermonters and potential Consumer Assistors, the following materials will be created and printed:

- **Direct mail pieces for populations that will use Vermont Health Connect** that can be tailored and distributed by DVHA, State agencies and partners with relevant mailing lists (at a minimum, mailers will be sent to current Medicaid, Dr. Dynasaur, Catamount and VHAP beneficiaries)
- **Brochures for consumers** that describe how Vermont Health Connect works, offer visuals of the website, and promote the different ways people can get help enrolling in a plan, including the website and call center
- **Brochure for small businesses** that describes benefits to small business owners, the help that’s available to enroll, and the option of purchasing a plan for employees or encouraging them to enroll directly through Vermont Health Connect

In July/August 2012, GMMB (the State’s communications consultant) fielded an informal survey to members of the Bi-State Primary Care Association, many of which are interested in serving as Navigators (Consumer Assistors), to get a better understanding of the enrollment assistance landscape and their materials needs.

In March 2011, GMMB conducted interviews with over 100 of Vermont’s small businesses.

In June 2012, GMMB facilitated focus groups with individuals and small businesses to learn more about their current level of understanding and future needs related to Vermont Health Connect.

- **Poster** that promotes the website, call center hotline and other ways people can get help enrolling through Vermont Health Connect
- **Palm card** that describes how to choose a plan offered through Vermont Health Connect, highlighting the basic benefits of every plan, and giving tips on what to consider when comparing plans, promoting all of the ways people can get help enrolling
- **Payroll insert** written to educate small business, part-time and seasonal employees about the Vermont Health Connect website and encouraging them to learn more about new health coverage options
- **Pharmacy bag/envelope insert** to be used in partnerships with retail pharmacies, health clinics and more, to provide the basics of Vermont Health Connect and the enrollment help that's available
- **Table tents** that can be propped in opportune locations, such as in restaurants following college graduation when graduating students may need to find a health insurance plan

Printed materials will be stored at a fulfillment house in Vermont for easy distribution and monitoring of quantities. All materials will be distributed ahead of open enrollment periods, and partners and Consumer Assisters will have the opportunity to fulfill additional orders as supply allows.

Printed materials that can be saved in PDF form will be available to community partners and Consumer Assisters on the Vermont Health Connect website for easy access and download. This will be particularly important for materials that are not printed due to low need, but still add value to specific outreach efforts.

## ONLINE MATERIALS

The primary objective of online materials is to drive traffic to the Vermont Health Connect website. Additionally, online materials – particularly when used in earned or social media outreach – will be used to plug into online conversations about health care in Vermont and add relevant information to the discussion.

Online materials will be one of the more efficient tools in driving website traffic because it meets Vermonters where they are – online – and gives them access to Vermont Health Connect in one click. These materials will include:

- **Tax credit calculator** to help Vermonters determine their potential credit that can also be available to be hosted on partner websites (this tool may incorporate the tax credit sliding scale included in UX2014 designs)

UX2014 is research project intended to provide states with an informed user experience construct for Exchange websites, including design recommendations.

- **Web buttons** to live on partner and State websites that link to the Vermont Health Connect website
- **Web language** that can be featured on partner’s websites, encouraging people to visit the Vermont Health Connect website
- **Infographic** detailing the enrollment process for individuals and small businesses in a simple and graphic way

Online materials will be available on the partners’ page of the Vermont Health Connect website for easy access and download.

## TRAINING MATERIALS

Training materials will be created for the purpose of preparing partners, Consumer Assisters, state employees, and other stakeholders for their interactions with Vermonters related to Vermont Health Connect. Much of the language developed for printed or online promotional materials will be used in training materials for consistency. These materials will include:

- **Train-the-trainer curriculum**, including some of the resources listed below, to be shared with community partners, state employees, stakeholders, and others to ensure that as many “touch points” as possible are a part of the outreach and education process and communications are consistent
- **Presentation Materials** detailing the basics of Vermont Health Connect, eligibility and enrollment for individuals, families and small businesses that can be used in trainings, conferences, webinars, etc.
- **FAQs** that provide accurate answers to the most likely questions Vermonters will have about Vermont Health Connect
- **Core messages** to use with individuals, families and small business owners
- **Basic computer and internet how-to resources** to ensure that partners and Consumer Assisters conducting outreach and education in rural, low-broadband areas know how to clearly communicate a process by which someone can access Vermont Health Connect

These materials do not include the rigorous training curriculum that will be required of Consumer Assisters; however, much of that content will be carried over to these materials.

Training materials will be available on the “Community Partners” page of the Vermont Health Connect website for easy access and download.

## ADMINISTRATIVE MATERIALS

Often overlooked, administrative materials with the same look and feel as other resources developed for consumers and will reinforce the Vermont Health Connect identity. Vermont Health Connect letterhead, business cards and other office materials will be designed and produced to help reinforce Vermont Health Connect as an official, State entity.

## EVALUATION

Once materials are in the hands of consumers, partners and Consumer Assistants, we will have an opportunity to better assess their effectiveness and need. During open enrollment, we will consider the reception of materials to ensure that there are no major gaps in available materials (in format, type, etc.) and that there is no misinformation or misleading content.

Following each open enrollment session, an assessment of all materials and their dissemination will be made to determine if updates – in type, format, content or otherwise – need to be made. We will also reach out to partners and Consumer Assistants to gauge what materials were of most value to their efforts.

## EARNED MEDIA

The process by which non-paid media coverage is secured for purposes of educating the public about the Exchange.

Media coverage will play a crucial role in statewide perception of Vermont Health Connect and ultimately, in driving Vermonters to enroll. It is important to take advantage of the heightened media attention Vermont Health Connect will receive leading up to 2014, and use it as an opportunity to continually educate Vermonters about upcoming reforms that will affect them.

## WHAT WE'RE TRYING TO ACHIEVE

Providing consistent and transparent information to Vermont media will help in the effort to reach as many Vermonters as possible, especially those most likely to enroll. Because Vermont Health Connect is just one component in a series of reforms to the state's health care system, it is important that Vermonters understand how Vermont Health Connect fits into the State's long-term goals. The goal of earned media outreach is to:

- Raise awareness of upcoming health reforms
- Educate Vermonters about Vermont Health Connect and how they can access coverage
- Demonstrate success to key stakeholders

- Provide media with transparent, easy-to-follow information that they can express to the Vermont public

## WHO WE'RE TRYING TO REACH

Through Vermont's local news sources, we are trying to reach:

- Exchange-eligible Vermonters in need of information on how to enroll
- Key stakeholders, such as policymakers, carriers, health care providers and others who are invested in the success of Vermont Health Connect

## HOW WE'RE GOING TO DO IT

The following principles and tactics will help ensure a robust effort that engages members of the media across Vermont who ultimately reach eligible Vermonters and stakeholders.

- Identify resources
- Tailor outreach and materials
- Build strong relationships with media
- Engage a variety of mediums and outlets
- Tell a story

## OVERVIEW

In order to engage media in a positive dialogue, we will tell the positive story about the reforms affecting Vermonters. As Vermont Health Connect opens for enrollment and starts to reach benchmarks, an aggressive earned media campaign will push out stories and showcase successes.

## IDENTIFY RESOURCES

The following are foundational components of the earned media strategy:

- **Conduct a media landscape.** A quick assessment of earned media coverage of Vermont Health Connect to date will determine if and how inaccuracies and information gaps can be remedied.
- **Build a media list.** There are a range of media outlets in Vermont, but finding those that Vermonters most rely upon, will be key to the earned media effort. A media list will identify outlets and publications, reporters (health care, policy, politics, lifestyle, etc.) and their contact information to guide subsequent outreach.
- **Identify and train spokespeople.** It is important to have a core set of spokespeople who can speak knowledgeably about Vermont Health Connect with reporters and bloggers at a moment's notice. In addition to leadership, spokespeople in the Governor's office and other state agencies will be identified to participate in media

training. We will also identify key stakeholders, Consumer Assistants, partners, and others who can serve as spokespeople.

## TAILOR OUTREACH AND MATERIALS

Whether it is television, radio, print or online, we aim to provide information that is easy for the media to interpret and communicate to their readers, listeners or viewers. Interviews, stories, content and other materials must be developed with consideration for the medium and the reporter's needs.

- **Develop an editorial calendar that spans mediums.** The calendar will outline opportunities to tie into existing themes, stories and events that outlets are covering and will include outreach that works for small community papers and network TV stations. Existing themes include back-to-school or cold and flu season, when health care is top of mind.
- **Provide engaging and easy-to-use content.** To help ensure coverage of Vermont Health Connect, creating content that is interesting to reporters will be a priority, including an infographic that simply demonstrates how Vermont Health Connect will work, visuals of the team hard at work, regularly updated data on how many Vermonters stand to gain coverage, and more. Template newsletters and radio readers that smaller, understaffed outlets can plug and play, will also be created.
- **Draft tailored op-eds.** Vermonters are interested in what is directly affecting their communities. Op-eds will feature region-specific facts and data, and where possible, stories from local residents. Op-eds will be timely and align with outreach waves.

## BUILD STRONG RELATIONSHIPS WITH MEDIA

Developing key relationships with reporters and getting information out the door on a consistent basis will help make Vermont Health Connect as accessible as possible. The following work will support relationship building:

- **Hold editorial board meetings and reporter roundtables.** Reporters want to provide readers with timely information, and therefore, will want an early preview of Vermont Health Connect and what it will mean to Vermonters. By holding editorial board and roundtable meetings with key reporters, we can proactively provide media with the information about Vermont Health Connect that Vermonters want to know. The following resources will be developed to in advance of editorial board meetings:
  - Memo detailing the purpose of the meeting
  - Assessment of recent, related coverage by newspaper/reporters

- Fact sheet with uninsured and underinsured data
- Easy-to-read overview and FAQs
- **Arrange pre-launch interviews with leadership with interested media outlets.** This will give the media an opportunity get answers to the questions that Vermonters are really asking. By proactively arranging interviews with media, we can ensure that everything the public needs and wants to know is available to them through their local media outlets.
- **Issue regular updates.** Be it through media advisories, press releases, or conversations over coffee – keeping the media up to date on development and implementation of Vermont Health Connect will ensure a consistent narrative and accurate reporting.

## ENGAGE A VARIETY OF MEDIUMS AND OUTLETS

An effective earned media approach engages a variety of mediums and outlets including radio programs, community and regional newspapers, local TV stations, and bloggers that Vermonters are familiar with and look to for reliable information. A special emphasis will be placed on the media outlets that reach those Vermonters who do not have access to the Internet and those who consume their media primarily through smaller, local outlets and programs.

- **Plan a multi-faceted press launch.** Vermont Health Connect will be “launched” in the summer of 2013 at a press event in Burlington or Rutland – informing Vermonters of coverage options available and the new tool they can use to compare plans ahead of open enrollment. The press event will be co-sponsored by two to three partner organizations and feature Exchange leadership, State leadership, a Consumer Assister or call center employee who can speak to the assistance that will be available, and Vermonters who stand to benefit from the availability of Vermont Health Connect. The press event will be supported by a radio media tour, a media advisory alerting interested parties about the event, a press release with quotes from Vermont Health Connect spokespeople, b-roll for Vermont TV stations, digital content for bloggers, and more. We will also work with stakeholders to promote the event through their networks.
- **Develop media partnerships.** A sponsored health care series – either on a network of radio stations or with one broadcast television station – will create an ongoing storyline for Vermont Health Connect. This presents an opportunity to feature a variety of spokespeople over time – such as State leadership launching Vermont Health Connect, Consumer Assistants answering questions, partners promoting enrollment events, individuals who have successfully enrolled in health coverage and more. In some cases, these partnerships can be leveraged when placing paid media buys. For example, WFFF, the local Fox broadcast affiliate, features a

“health connection” section of their website that directs users to health news that might be relevant to them. Partnering with WFFF could include promotion through an on-air health segment that can be mirrored on their website. Leading up to launch and through open-enrollment, the segment could feature monthly updates from Exchange spokespeople, including leadership, Consumer Assistants, community partners and more.

- **Don't forget the community papers.** Weekly community papers often allow for pre-written articles to be featured in the publication. Because of the rural nature of the state, these papers will extend the reach of earned media. Where possible, we will include images - such as enrollment fairs or website screenshots.

## TELL A STORY

Vermonters want to hear about Vermont Health Connect from someone who has used it. We will seek out success stories that demonstrate the ease of enrollment, availability of assistance and security of having health coverage.

According to the statewide benchmark survey (March 2012), 81 percent of Vermonters indicate that they are most interested in hearing about Vermont Health Connect from someone who has used it.

- **Build an Exchange story bank.** As individuals and small business owners interact with and find coverage through Vermont Health Connect, an opportunity to share their experience – either online or through a recorded video on an iPhone or similar device – will be available and promoted where appropriate. This includes collecting stories of people who received tax credits, used helpful tools to compare plans, and easily found coverage with the help of an Exchange representative. The story bank portion of the Vermont Health Connect website will guide users with questions to ensure that their stories are relevant to Vermont Health Connect. Select stories will be distributed to the media to demonstrate to Vermonters that “people like you” are easily accessing affordable health insurance through Vermont Health Connect. Stories will also be shared through the website, social media and at events.

## EVALUATION

Evaluating earned media efforts requires a balance of quantitative and qualitative measures. In order to measure either, regular tracking of media coverage is required. This can be as simple as monitoring news stories online and following up with media contacts, to more specific tracking through paid services that gather hits based on pre-determined filters.

Quantitative measures of earned media efforts will evaluate:

- Number of print stories
- Number of online stories
- Number of blog stories
- Number of television stories
- Number of radio stories

Qualitative measures of earned media efforts are more difficult to track. As the goal of earned media efforts is to raise awareness, post-launch research that probes how respondents heard about Vermont Health Connect may identify media. As a strategy of these efforts includes telling a story, measuring the amount of media coverage that leverages personal stories (particularly those promoted in outreach) is another measure of success. And finally, the positive vs. negative portrayal of Vermont Health Connect in media coverage can be assessed.

<b>PAID MEDIA</b>	The placement of paid promotions on television, the radio, in newspapers and other venues. This effort will have the broadest reach to Vermonters.
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Paid media will extend the reach of outreach and education efforts through promotions on television, radio, online, and in print publications. This type of promotional effort will provide far reaching coverage of the activities happening on the ground to promote Vermont Health Connect.

### WHAT WE'RE TRYING TO ACHIEVE

Vermont Health Connect will have a significant impact on the State's health care system. Communicating its role to those beyond individuals eligible to use it requires efforts that extend outreach, such as paid media. Paid media can also be targeted in ways that some outreach cannot. Ultimately, the goals of paid media are to:

- Raise awareness of Vermont Health Connect
- Encourage eligible-Vermonters to visit the Vermont Health Connect website
- Supplement outreach taking place on the ground – ensuring that Vermonters are being reached through multiple touch points

### WHO WE'RE TRYING TO REACH

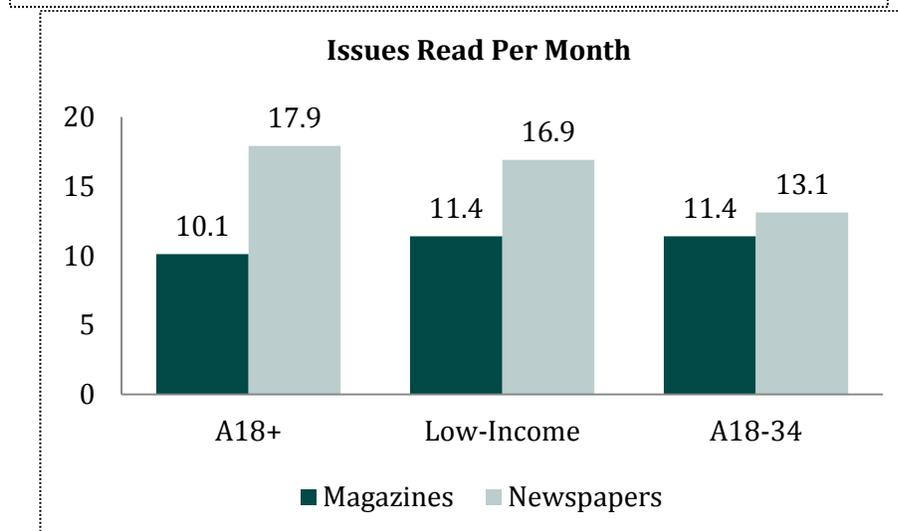
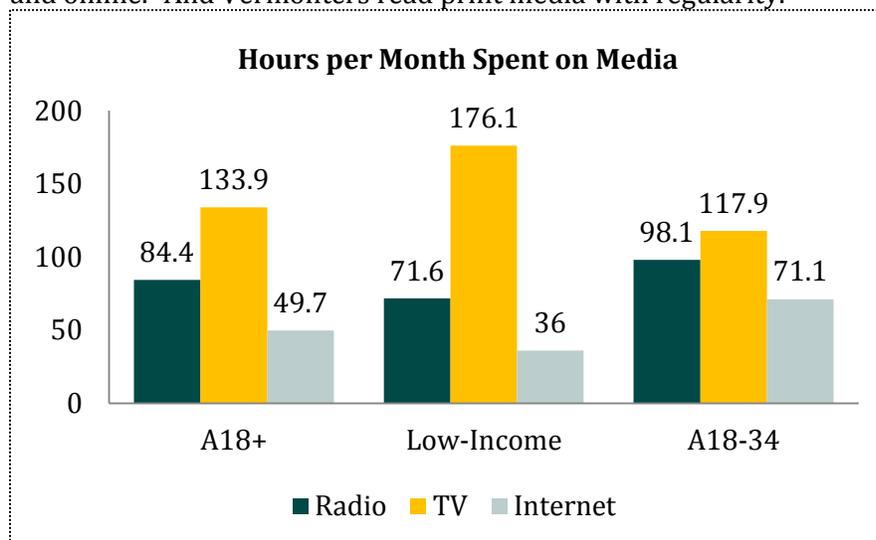
The expected audiences of paid promotions will guide resource allocation. An important consideration will be determining how we can leverage the ways in which different mediums can reach various demographics, geography, interests and more. The audiences for paid media include:

- Vermonters age 18-64, with a special emphasis on:
  - Young adults, ages 18-34
  - Low-income Vermonters, likely eligible for Medicaid or tax credits
  - Small business owners

## HOW WE'RE GOING TO DO IT

Paid media placements will be strategically timed so that Vermonters hear about Vermont Health Connect leading up to launch and during subsequent open enrollment periods when we want to drive them to the website. An individual needs to see a message an average of 10 to 18 times in order to motivate action. The paid media effort will be coordinated to reinforce the activities of advocates, partners, agencies and other stakeholders and ultimately communicate the Vermont Health Connect message as many times as possible, through as many touch points as possible.

Research on Vermont's media habits demonstrates that Vermonters spend a fair amount of time per month watching television, listening to the radio and online.<sup>5</sup> And Vermonters read print media with regularity.<sup>6</sup>



<sup>5</sup> MRI: Fall 2011. VT/ME/NH Residents. Low-Income defined as HHI<\$40k/year.

<sup>6</sup> MRI: Fall 2011. VT/ME/NH Residents. Low-Income defined as HHI<\$40k/year.

As such, paid media will be channeled through the following mediums:

- Television
- Radio
- Online
- Print
- Non-traditional

## OVERVIEW

The paid media plan will include statewide paid media placements as well as regional media placements to reach high numbers of uninsured, and in specialized media outlets, to reach specific audiences. While the paid promotions will target Vermonters of all ages, there will be an emphasis on reaching those Vermonters ages 26-34 who we know to be grouped with the highest number of uninsured. There will also be pieces in trade publications and at trade shows to reach small business owners. Waves of paid media will run between July 2013 and December 2014. The initial wave of paid media will serve to raise awareness of Vermont Health Connect while subsequent waves will be focus on driving enrollment.

## TELEVISION (TV)

TV has the best and widest reach of all paid media. TV is in 94 percent of all homes in Vermont and has the ability to convey sight and sound in an emotional way like no other medium.<sup>7</sup> The television media buy will include statewide broadcast placements on networks in the Burlington media market to reach Vermonters in every county in the state, including:

- WCAX (CBS affiliate)
- WPTZ (NBC affiliate)
- WVNY (ABC affiliate)
- WFFF (FOX affiliate)
- Cable networks

It is important to note that there are a number of television and radio markets that spillover into Vermont. This means residents may see media coverage of the New York, New Hampshire or Massachusetts state Exchanges. Bennington County and Rutland get spillover from the Albany market, Windham County and Windsor get spillover from the Boston market, and the entire state gets Boston-based NESN (sports) and NECN (news). There is also some influence of Canadian TV in Vermont markets. With no control over the media placements of other state Exchanges, we will be prepared to answer questions, should they arise, about external coverage.

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<sup>7</sup> TV HHs – 242,420 (Nielsen, May 2012); 2010 Census numbers for Occupied Housing in VT = 256,442 (so 94.5% are TV HHs)

## ONLINE

Online promotion will link Vermonters directly to the Vermont Health Connect website. Because results are immediate, online promotion allows for easy monitoring and optimization. Paid media, and in some cases specific messages, will be placed on websites that reach specific audiences in Vermont, including young adults, small business owners and ethnic communities.

Online promotion allows us to precisely disseminate information to Exchange-eligible populations. Websites can focus paid media to reach specific states, cities, and even zip codes. This allows Vermont Health Connect promotions to run on national websites without the waste of a national audience, as only the specified geographic area will see the online media. This can be used to efficiently reach smaller communities, such as non-English speaking Vermonters, who visit national, non-English websites. The online portion of the sample media plan includes placements through websites such as:

- Google, Bing and Yahoo (paid search and banner ads)
- Facebook
- YouTube
- MTV
- Vermont Digger
- BurlingtonFreePress.com
- WCAX.com
- WPTZ.com
- 7DVT.com
- Pandora
- Front Porch Forum
- TimesArgus.com
- RutlandHerald.com
- Star929.com (radio – WEZF FM 92.9)
- 1013ESPN.com (radio – WCPV FM 101.3)
- Z971.com (radio – WZRT FM 97.1)
- 953TheWolf.com (radio - WXLF FM 107.1, WZLF FM 95.3)

## RADIO

Radio is second only to TV in reach, with over 80 percent of the Vermont population listening.<sup>8</sup> Radio placements will be used to reach into the rural areas of Vermont. The various radio formats allow for audience segmentation. Paid promotions will be placed in the Burlington-Plattsburgh, Montpelier-Barre-Waterbury, and Lebanon-Rutland-White River Junction radio markets.

Paid media placements on radio stations can often be leveraged for added value that can include bonus weight, on-air endorsements, DJ live remotes and events/sponsorships and a variety of co-branded opportunities.

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<sup>8</sup> 82.9% listen to radio in the VT/ME/NH subgroup (MRI, Spring 2012)

## PRINT

Print is a high reaching medium in smaller, rural communities. On average, Vermonters receive 17.9 newspaper issues per month and 10.1 magazines per month.<sup>9</sup> Print media will be used to reach Vermonters statewide, through daily and weekly newspapers; and the small business community through trade publications. The print portion of the sample media plan includes placements in:

- Burlington Free Press
- Rutland Herald
- Caledonian Record
- Brattleboro Reformer
- Times Argus
- Seven Days
- Rutland Tribune
- Essex Reporter
- Battenkill Business Journal
- Champlain Business Journal
- Rutland Business Journal
- Valley Business Journal

## NON-TRADITIONAL

We will also leverage other outlets that complement traditional media and reinforce the Vermont Health Connect message. These outlets include:

- State and county fairs
- Remote feed packages with local radio stations – to broadcast from events like state and county fairs where tabling/enrollment work is taking place.
- Sponsorship of walks and runs

## EVALUATION

Paid media metrics are generally available from the outlets through which the media is being placed. Television and radio programs can provide viewer/listener demographics and print publications can provide readership numbers. These numbers, as determined by the scope of the media buy, will give a broad sense of reach and frequency. Online promotion generally allows for more trackable metrics – identifying when an individual clicks on something like a banner and visits the website (and going so far as tracking how much time they subsequently spend on the Vermont Health Connect website and how many pages they visit). Other evaluation metrics that can be attributed to paid media include:

- Number of website visitors to Vermont Health Connect
- Number of calls to the Vermont Health Connect call center
- Awareness of Vermont Health Connect

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<sup>9</sup> VT/ME/NH Residents Media Usage Habits (MRI, Fall 2011)

Should a post-test survey be fielded (similar to the March 2012 statewide survey), respondents can be asked to recall Vermont Health Connect campaign materials or indicate how they heard of Vermont Health Connect or why they visited the website.

## SOCIAL MEDIA

The online dialogue between Vermonters and the Exchange, through platforms such as Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn, which allow the Exchange to be part of the public “conversation” about health care reform in Vermont.

Social media requires a consistent effort and well-thought-out plan to ensure that audiences are actively engaged on a regular basis. Social media allows us to meet Vermonters where they are: online, in conversations about their health care or the health care system.

### WHAT WE'RE TRYING TO ACHIEVE

While each social media channel will serve its own purpose, the overarching goals behind developing a dialogue with residents are to:

- Raise awareness of Vermont Health Connect
- Educate and steer Vermonters to the website
- Inform stakeholders of progress

### WHO WE'RE TRYING TO REACH

The audience for social media will vary, but the outreach and dialogue will be aimed at:

- Vermonters with computer and/or internet access, with specific outreach to young adults
- Stakeholders who will be best served, and may rely on, regular updates, including:
  - Advocates
  - Community organizations
  - Policymakers
  - Media
  - Carriers
  - Brokers/Agents

### HOW WE'RE GOING TO DO IT

The process of engaging Vermonters through social media process will be detailed across three components:

- Positively and transparently engage with audiences
- Drive users to Vermont Health Connect
- Inspire users to share their story

## OVERVIEW

Social media outreach will stretch across Facebook, Twitter and other platforms to engage the defined audiences, especially those Vermonters ages 18-34 who we know are the highest uninsured group, and who are also the most active online demographic. Adults 18-34 spend approximately 71 hours online per month as compared to adults 18-64 at approximately 49 hours per month.

There are many individuals and places in the state that do not have steady access to the internet. Therefore, this outreach will be created for a smaller demographic that is more likely to be online.

Ultimately, the purpose of social media engagement is to meet potential enrollees online – allowing for the most efficient and direct connection to the Vermont Health Connect website. Effective online engagement requires some modification to traditional outreach strategies. In this medium, outreach will be guided by the following principles:

- **Post regularly:** Consistency is critical. Readers need a reason to return.
- **Be succinct but conversational:** Get to the point quickly and dispense information and stories.
- **Be relevant:** Give people a reason to talk about you or your partners by sharing excellent content and interacting with followers.
- **Be compelling:** Keep content compelling by regularly posting video, photos, research and graphic elements.
- **Be connected:** Enter conversations and engage others. Reach out to peers, colleagues and other influential people and groups.
- **Share content from other sources and comment on posts:** Sharing ideas with others is a great way to grow your audience.

## ENGAGE WITH AUDIENCES

Social media is not a one-way communication tool. It requires a balance of pushing out relevant information and engaging in the online conversations happening around the state. This means being a resource, answering questions, and reaching out to online communities who will benefit from new information.

- **Create an editorial calendar** to guide tweets, posts and digital content to push out through social media.

- **Develop a protocol for online engagement** to guide decisions pertaining to how and when to engage, what type of information can be provided, when to direct people to Consumer Assistants and more.
- **Push out steady stream of facts, figures and visuals** that are easily understood and interesting to users and their networks.
- **Tie content to communications “waves”** through posts and tweets that are relevant to open enrollment, back-to-school and other key moments.
- **Engage with Vermonters (especially young adults) through Facebook and Twitter** by creating and maintaining accounts for Vermont Health Connect. Initial content will center on the fact that Vermont Health Connect is coming and where Vermonters can turn now for coverage. Accounts will be kept relevant and fresh with updated content and compelling visuals.
- **Build a Facebook timeline** to reflect Vermont’s rich history of health care reform and guide Vermonters through upcoming changes related to Vermont Health Connect.
- **Leverage existing social media** by connecting through the State’s social media pages that Vermonters are already familiar with.
- **Reach small businesses through LinkedIn** where there are business groups (and businesses often identify by their number of employees) and encourage small business owners who have taken up the small business tax credit and those who have a positive experience with Vermont Health Connect to share with their peers through updates, posts and blog entries. Some potential LinkedIn groups include:
  - Vermont Business Leaders Networking Group
  - Vermont Businesses for Social Responsibility
  - Vermont Business Roundtable FRIENDS

## DRIVE USERS TO VERMONT HEALTH CONNECT

As Vermont Health Connect nears launch, the social media strategy will shift from conversation to connection. The same users that have been engaged in conversations pertaining to health care will now be directed to the tools and resources available on the Vermont Health Connect website where they can search and compare health plans. Social media channels will be used to promote enrollment opportunities when Vermont Health Connect is open for business. That said, user tools will be available prior to launch, and when applicable, Vermonters will be directed to those tools.

- **Provide a link to the Vermont Health Connect website** in social media content and, when appropriate, in online conversations.

- **Encourage users to share the Vermont Health Connect website** after they have checked it out for the first time or enrolled in a plan.
- **Provide sample content to partners and stakeholders** to use to promote Vermont Health Connect through their social media accounts, including template tweets and Facebook posts.

### INSPIRE USERS TO SHARE THEIR STORY

When it comes to making health care decisions, people trust word of mouth recommendations from their friends and family. By inspiring fellow Vermonters to share their story – of obtaining coverage, benefitting from financial assistance, or easily navigating the Vermont Health Connect website – others will feel more comfortable exploring Vermont Health Connect.

- **Encourage users to share their experience** through a *Share Your Story* section of the Vermont Health Connect website.
- **Push out stories of real Vermonters** who have used Vermont Health Connect to find health coverage, gathered through the story bank, on social media channels.

### EVALUATION

Tracking social media can be facilitated by online tools – many of them free. Facebook allows accounts access to “Facebook insights” – an analytics tool. Also, tools such as Topsy (compare mentions and retweets), Twitter Counter (compare followers, followings and tweet volumes), TweepMap (identify where followers are from) and others can be used to capture metrics on Twitter. Key metrics to take track social media outreach include:

- Number of followers of “likes”
- Number of mentions and/or retweets
- Number of visits to the Vermont Health Connect website from social media channels

## STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

The manner by which individuals, organizations and other entities, with a vested interest in Vermont Health Connect, are engaged in development and implementation.

The ability to include and manage a diverse set of stakeholders who are invested in Vermont Health Connect will be critical to its success. It is important that this work be proactive leading up to the launch of Vermont Health Connect, consistently maintained throughout enrollment pushes, and beyond.

### WHAT WE'RE TRYING TO ACHIEVE

A successful stakeholder engagement strategy requires a balance of engaging, hearing and responding to stakeholders, while at the same time, maintaining strong leadership at the State level. The objectives of stakeholder engagement are to:

- Demonstrate transparency
- Demonstrate success to key stakeholders
- Supply partners and Consumer Assistants with the resources they need to conduct outreach and education

### WHO WE'RE TRYING TO REACH

Effective stakeholder engagement means maintaining a transparent and collaborative relationship with external stakeholders that will be crucial to your success. These include:

- Consumers and representing organizations;
- Insurers;
- The business community;
- Health care professionals and points-of-care;
- Brokers/Agents;
- Advocates;
- Community organizations; and
- Public officials (including the Green Mountain Care Board).

### HOW WE'RE GOING TO DO IT

- Outreach team
- Collaboration with targeted stakeholders
- Medicaid and Exchange Advisory Board
- Public forums
- Training

## OVERVIEW

Stakeholder engagement requires an ongoing commitment to share information and engage key individuals and organizations. Development milestones will guide communications to stakeholders, but engagement requires regular updates and communications to maintain relationships.

## OUTREACH TEAM

In Phase I, we will organize an outreach team that interacts with Vermonters directly affected by Vermont Health Connect. The purpose of the group is to build a connected network that can educate Vermonters about all aspects of Vermont Health Connect. This team will be comprised of representatives from a variety of departments as well as volunteers from external organizations. The outreach team will serve as ambassadors to both internal and external audiences – demonstrating a unified effort and maximizing outreach and education efforts. In addition to engaging with the Medicaid and Exchange Advisory board and presenting at public forums, this team will be tapped to connect with:

- **Public officials.** With a direct line to the constituents they represent, public officials have the ability to inform residents about Vermont Health Connect and how it impacts them. Constant communication with public officials, such as State legislators, local representatives or members of the Green Mountain Care Board, will aid the progress of Vermont Health Connect development and future health care system changes.
- **Carriers.** While the groundwork for Vermont Health Connect is laid, carriers will be in the throes of their own strategic planning. Keeping an open line of communication will not only help with communication to Vermonters, but it will help tell the positive story of strategic partnerships with the shared end goal of serving Vermonters.
- **External Networks.** Both state staff and external staff work to assist Vermonters with health coverage questions and decision making. This group will ensure that those individuals have the tools and support they need to educate their networks about the Vermont Health Connect.

**Outreach Team materials and tools** will be developed to support member’s education work. Members will also be supplied with all outreach materials, as they are developed. The outreach team’s tools may include:

- Vermont Health Connect overview documents
- Presentation materials (PowerPoint, handouts, exercises, etc.)
- Language for electronic posting and distribution
- Training opportunities and supporting materials

## MEDICAID AND EXCHANGE ADVISORY BOARD

Stakeholder engagement will begin with the Medicaid and Exchange Advisory Board (MEAB) whose members bring diverse perspectives. As an independent body, the MEAB will bring critical thinking to components of the Exchange's development and implementation.

- **Present regularly at advisory board meetings** to share updates, facilitate discussion around implementation and accept feedback.
- **Post advisory board meeting materials online** to give Vermonters access to the same information.
- **Solicit feedback** from the advisory board members on outreach strategies and request support for implementing these strategies.

## PUBLIC FORUMS

Public forums present an opportunity to inform Vermonters on Exchange development, educate them on how it will function and its role in the health care system, and facilitate input in a manner that is constructive and contributes to the building process.

Forums will be hosted statewide on a monthly basis. Over time, their role will evolve. As Vermont Health Connect moves through the development process, the forums will detail the decisions being made and progress towards launch. Closer to open enrollment, when the Vermont Health Connect website is ready for browsing, the forums will focus on the offerings available through Vermont Health Connect. Materials will be created for all public forums, including:

- PowerPoint presentation to guide the discussion
- Handouts available for attendees to take home

Each month, two to three public forums will be hosted in towns and cities across the state, including:

- Barre
- Bennington
- Brattleboro
- Burlington
- Colchester
- Essex
- Hartford
- Milton
- Montpelier
- Newport
- Randolph
- Rutland
- Shelburne
- Springfield
- St. Albans
- St. Johnsbury
- Winooski

In addition, the outreach team and spokespeople will be available to attend existing meetings and present on Vermont Health Connect.

## EVALUATION

Successful stakeholder engagement can only truly be marked by the relationships with stakeholders and their assessment of it. Over time, checking in with key stakeholders to ensure that they feel informed and heard will determine if engagement strategies need to be altered.

Measuring stakeholder engagement overtime can be gauged by:

- Number of presentations to the MEAB
- Number of public forums hosted
- Number of public forum attendees
- Number of public event presentations given on Vermont Health Connect

## COMMUNITY OUTREACH

The process of establishing relationships with key organizations and planning grassroots activities that can help reach Vermonters in their communities.

Community outreach represents the coordinated effort to reach Vermonters in communities across the state – particularly those who are hard-to-reach.

## WHAT WE'RE TRYING TO ACHIEVE

While traditional promotion provides the widest reach, community outreach and one-on-one interaction with eligible Vermonters is critical to really connecting with Vermonters and providing the in-person help they will need. We will reach Vermonters where they live, work and play through the engagement of key organizations and a set of on-the-ground activities.

Through community outreach, we seek to:

- Raise awareness of Vermont Health Connect through well-known messengers
- Break through to harder-to-reach audiences across the state
- Provide a community-centric opportunity for Vermonters to learn about and enroll through Vermont Health Connect

## WHO WE'RE TRYING TO REACH

Community outreach will serve as a touch point in communities throughout the state and will engage thousands of Vermonters. This work will be focused on:

- Vermonters ages 18-64, including:
  - Lower-income individuals who may be eligible for Medicaid or tax credits
  - Small business owners
  - Small business employees who may be eligible for coverage

## HOW WE'RE GOING TO DO IT

We want to reach those audiences who need the most help, and will take the most convincing to enroll through Vermont Health Connect, such as lower-income residents and those who have completed fewer years of schooling. Community outreach will be critical in introducing the Vermont Health Connect website to Vermonters who do not have access to a computer or internet.

Our approach is two pronged:

1. Engage individuals and organizations that interact with Vermonters in their community, including:
  - Community organizations
  - State agencies and offices
  - Corporate and retail entities
  - Health care professionals
  - Small business organizations
2. Work with these organizations to carry out Vermont Health Connect outreach and education, including:
  - Materials distribution
  - Communications Pushes
  - Community Presentations
  - Direct Mail
  - Vermont Public Access TV Production
  - Mobile enrollment days (in conjunction with Consumer Assisters)

## OVERVIEW

Reaching our audiences as they go about their daily lives will reinforce the messages received via paid and earned media, and can make the difference between hearing a message and acting on it.

We will engage community, small business and health care professional organizations that have established trust with and access to Exchange-eligible populations. Partnerships with large businesses and big brand

corporations will be an equally important entry into these communities. And working with state agencies and offices, who are often in direct communication with these groups, will reinforce the “no wrong door” approach to enrollment and effectively communicate with hard-to-reach populations.

Organizations will be asked to participate in a number of ways, and we will look for unique opportunities to work with groups based on their networks and existing communication channels. Organizations will be equipped with clear messages, FAQs, and other background documents that ensure they can answer questions in their community.

## FORGE PARTNERSHIPS

Partnerships that reach audiences and drive enrollment will be the top priority for community outreach. The best way to secure partnerships and execute them in an efficient and cost-effective manner is to strategically plan partnership outcomes to support enrollment goals. Each partnership will require tailoring for different organizations and audiences, but the streamlined approach will lend itself to consistency in message and materials. Partnerships will be leveraged to:

- Promote Vermont Health Connect through posters and flyers
- Communicate through emails, listservs, newsletters, mailings, etc.
- Distribute materials like brochures or pharmacy bag inserts
- Host information sessions for members and the public
- Connect Vermonters to Consumer Assisters
- Host “In-Person Assistance” days to facilitate enrollment

### Community Organizations

Community organizations – those that work on a local level to represent and serve their constituencies – will serve as reliable conduits to Vermont Health Connect. We will approach these groups to connect with hard-to-reach Vermonters and educate them about Vermont Health Connect and the coverage options available to them.

Many of the same groups that support health reform will want, and need, to play a large role in promoting Vermont Health Connect. Advocates’ and stakeholders deep roots in communities across the state, as well as with community organizations, will be a driving force behind enrollment.

### State Agencies and Offices

To date, in the development of Vermont Health Connect, DVHA has been successful in engaging with what are often overlooked assets: fellow state agencies. This engagement will be crucial for Vermont Health Connect. State employees will be educated about Vermont Health Connect so that they can be credible and knowledgeable ambassadors (*see State Employee Communications on page 37*).

According to the statewide benchmark survey, 75 percent of Vermonters are interested in getting help from someone at a local organization.

Often times, a particular state agency or office serves as the sole trusted connection to state government, and that relationship will be leveraged to introduce Vermont Health Connect. Those agencies that are in regular contact with audiences will be engaged to maintain the “no wrong door” approach and connect Vermonters to coverage.

Additionally, many small businesses work with state agencies and departments on an ongoing basis, making state and local partnerships a guaranteed point-of-contact with small businesses.

### **Corporate and Retail Entities**

Corporate partnerships can elevate awareness and support for Vermont Health Connect. They present opportunities and venues for materials dissemination, and in some cases, engagement. The goal of these partnerships is to interact with Vermonters as they go about their everyday lives to make them aware of Vermont Health Connect.

### **Health Care Professionals**

Every day, patients turn to providers, clinics and health centers to answer their questions about health coverage. By working with organizations representing health care professionals, those on the front lines of our health care system will be armed with messages and information on Vermont Health Connect to share with their patients – particularly when they are most engaged at points of care.

### **Small Business Organizations**

Small business owners, as peers, are in the best position to have conversations with each other about Vermont Health Connect and the benefits of enrolling. In Vermont, there are a number of organizations that already manage and communicate with large networks of small businesses. Working with these organizations will facilitate information dissemination and encourage dialogue between small businesses to discuss the benefits of Vermont Health Connect.

Most importantly, the information provided to small business owners will enable them to properly weigh the benefits of participating in Vermont Health Connect. In order to help business owners make decisions to benefit their business and employees, the Vermont Health Connect website will provide information pertaining to federal tax credits, coverage options, and individual premium subsidies. As detailed in *Materials Development on page 9*, materials will be developed specifically for small business employers and employees.

According to the statewide benchmark survey, Vermonters are most interested in getting help from someone at a doctor’s office or clinic. Getting help from someone at an emergency room ranks high on the list for young adults, individuals without a college degree, and adults who are currently uninsured.

## ENGAGE PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

Managing the host of organizations that commit to promoting Vermont Health Connect and educating their members and communities requires a coordinated effort.

### **Statewide Grassroots Kick-off Meeting**

Gathering all individuals and organizations who will be engaged in outreach and education will mobilize hundreds, and hopefully, touch thousands. Outreach training and materials will be made available on the Vermont Health Connect website. Also, DVHA staff will be available to support volunteer outreach activities.

### **Community Outreach Listserv**

A listserv will be established for community outreach partners. Organizations will be encouraged to sign up at public events and on the website. The listserv will be used to update partners on development and alert them of available resources.

### **Template Language and Materials**

Organizations will be provided template language to use in their listservs, newsletters and on their websites, and materials to distribute in community outreach efforts. A web button and other online tools will encourage partners to link to the Vermont Health Connect website. Language will be updated to include timely messages based on time of year and what enrollment opportunities exist.

## COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Outreach will be designed to address enrollment barriers head on, by highlighting and providing help to enroll in the right plan on Vermont Health Connect. We will engage messengers such as health care providers, public health nurses, trusted community organizations, social workers and more.

A summer of 2013 “launch” of Vermont Health Connect will allow staff, Consumer Assistants and organizations to familiarize themselves with the Vermont Health Connect website and give Vermonters a destination to learn more as news of Vermont Health Connect becomes more and more prevalent. This effort will require significant coordination of the individuals and organizations that will be involved in communicating about Vermont Health Connect, conducting outreach, and assisting individuals and small businesses through their transition to Vermont Health Connect.

### **Materials Distribution**

Widespread materials distribution will be carried out by state agencies and district offices, organizations, corporate partners, and Consumer Assisters. Coordination of materials distribution will ensure a Vermont Health Connect presence at:

- Points of care such as health clinics, providers' offices, hospitals, health centers, retail clinics, and mobile flu units;
- Retail locations;
- Schools and colleges;
- Local chambers of commerce;
- Conferences and trade shows;
- Employers of seasonal workers;
- Health fairs; and
- State and county fairs.

### **Communication Pushes**

Organizations will be given the resources they need to share information about Vermont Health Connect through their listservs, websites and social media channels. They will be provided template language for listservs, newsletters, websites as well as sample tweets and Facebook posts that organizations can use to promote Vermont Health Connect. Templates will be updated leading up to the launch of Vermont Health Connect and post-launch to reflect the actions we want Vermonters to take.

### **Community Presentations**

A short PowerPoint presentation will be created so that organizations can educate their members about Vermont Health Connect. For example, local chambers of commerce might use this to educate their small business members about what the Vermont Health Connect means for them. Hospitals can present to their employees so they have the answers they need to the many questions they're likely to receive from patients and staff.

### **Direct Mail**

Sending direct mailings with basic information about Vermont Health Connect will help raise awareness of Vermont Health Connect, particularly among those in public programs who will see a change in their coverage. State agencies and partners with relevant mailing lists, such as those serving Medicaid, Dr. Dynasaur, Catamount and VHAP beneficiaries and the VT Chamber of Commerce, will be engaged.

### **Vermont Public Access TV Production**

We will explore the possibility of a partnership with Vermont Public Access Television, where Exchange leadership can speak to the value of Vermont Health Connect and real Vermonters, who have already used the Vermont Health Connect website or a Consumer Assister to find coverage, and can talk about their experience. The program would feature a short, online tutorial of the website and encourage viewers to visit or call the call center.

### Mobile Enrollment Days

Mobile enrollment days during which Consumer Assisters would be on site with laptops/iPads to walk Vermonters through the Vermont Health Connect website and enroll, will be coordinated with hospitals, public libraries and other groups and venues. Educational materials will be distributed, and partners will be on hand to record stories of Vermonters who successfully used Vermont Health Connect for the story bank.

### EVALUATION

Tracking community outreach will require assistance from the partner organizations and stakeholders who will execute much of the outreach. With their help, evaluation metrics for community outreach include:

- Number of events held
- Number of attendees at events
- Number of individuals enrolled through outreach
- Number of materials distributed

### STATE EMPLOYEE COMMUNICATIONS

The efforts to educate State Employees about the Exchange so that they are positioned to educate the Vermonters they interact with on a regular basis, particularly those who will be Exchange-eligible.

The state employees who interact with Vermonters must be prepared to answer basic questions and direct individuals to Vermont Health Connect. It will be important to engage State employees from the very beginning to ensure that they know and understand the changes that will occur around the creation of Vermont Health Connect and feel ownership in making it a success.

### WHAT WE'RE TRYING TO ACHIEVE

With so many State employees interacting with Vermonters on a daily basis, their familiarity with Vermont Health Connect will be crucial to a seamless launch and outreach effort. The objectives of engaging and educating state employees are to:

- Raise awareness of upcoming health reforms
- Increase knowledge of Vermont Health Connect among state employees
- Prepare state employees to inform and educate Vermonters they interact with about Vermont Health Connect

## WHO WE'RE TRYING TO REACH

Not all state employees will actively engage Exchange-eligible Vermonters about reforms, but they may get questions. As a conduit to Exchange-eligible Vermonters – be it through interactions on health care, heating assistance or business licensing – they have opportunities for communication and education. State employee communications will be crafted for:

- All Vermont state employees, particularly those who interact with Exchange-eligible populations

## HOW WE'RE GOING TO DO IT

The process by which outreach to and education of state employees will roll out will be to:

- Identify communication leads
- Implement “train-the-trainer” program
- Allow for two-way conversations
- Establish an intranet page for Vermont Health Connect
- Contribute to state mailings, listservs and newsletters

## OVERVIEW

Every employee in the State of Vermont is serving the public in one way or another. When providing any service, we want employees to be able to talk about the benefits of Vermont Health Connect and point Exchange-eligible Vermonters in the right direction. Whether the state employee is working at a DMV, for the Attorney General or in the Department of Labor, we want them to know the facts about Vermont Health Connect and where to direct Vermonters if they need assistance.

## IDENTIFY COMMUNICATION LEADS

The initial step of informing state employees about Vermont Health Connect will be to identify agency and office contacts who will serve as funnels to their co-workers and arming them with updates, news and communications they can share. These contacts will ultimately serve as “communication leads” and participate in a “train-the-trainer” program to prepare them to engage their co-workers and encourage them to serve as a resource on Vermont Health Connect.

## IMPLEMENT “TRAIN-THE-TRAINER” PROGRAM

Rather than organizing trainings for all state employees, a “train-the-trainer” program identifies a core group of leaders – the previously identified communication leads – who can participate in training and be prepared to conduct their own trainings to their staff and colleagues. By employing a train-the-trainer model, we will amplify our reach and surround Vermonters with consistent messages on Vermont Health Connect.

Staff leads will be led through a comprehensive training that walks them through Vermont Health Connect outreach strategies. Outreach materials and resources that they can use with their networks will also be reviewed.

Exchange representatives from the outreach team will also attend large state employee meetings and present information and updates.

### ALLOW FOR TWO-WAY CONVERSATIONS

State employees will want an opportunity educate their fellow Vermonters about Vermont Health Connect, and providing opportunities for a two-way conversation with Exchange staff will give them an opportunity to provide feedback and ask questions. This might include discussing incentives to help employees embrace and subsequently promote Vermont Health Connect. The Exchange staff will be available to prepare other departments and offices to talk to their Vermont “clients” about Vermont Health Connect, such as the Department of Labor’s regional offices.

### EVALUATION

Impact of state employee communications will ultimately be reflected in the levels of awareness among Vermonters. State employees will be trained to direct Vermonters to the Vermont Health Connect website, call center and Consumer Assistants, and the metrics for those mechanisms will determine success. If a post-launch survey is fielded, respondents could be asked how they heard about Vermont Health Connect and could identify a state office or employee.