

SHORT TERM, HIGH IMPACT OPTION

Prioritize the implementation of the integrated support model to streamline and improve customer service support for clients and assisters.

Colorado Covering Kids and Families' (CKF) report, *Colorado's Health Insurance Affordability Programs: Goals to Prioritize and Options to Consider to Create a More Direct Pathway to Health Coverage*, is the first to document and examine the eligibility and enrollment process in health insurance affordability programs since the implementation of the Affordable Care Act. Health insurance affordability programs include Health First Colorado (Colorado's Medicaid program), Child Health Plan *Plus*, and Advanced Premium Tax Credits and Cost Sharing Reductions to purchase a qualified health plan through the state's health insurance marketplace, Connect for Health Colorado.

In the report, CKF recommends nine goals for the state to prioritize to simplify, streamline, and coordinate the eligibility and enrollment process for health insurance affordability programs. Under each goal, various legislative, regulatory, and administrative options to reach the goal are provided for decision makers to consider. To complement the report, CKF produced fact sheets highlighting six of the options presented in the report that can be adopted in the short-term to have an immediate positive impact toward achieving the recommended goals. To access the other fact sheets, go to <http://ckf.cchn.org/publications/the-maze/>

There are many call centers that Coloradans have to choose between when they need help applying for and accessing health insurance affordability programs. These call centers include those based at county departments of human and social services, the Health First Colorado Customer Contact Center, the Connect for Health Colorado Service Center, and the Health First Colorado Enrollment call center.



Understanding the right entity and phone number to call in a particular situation is challenging and confusing, even for seasoned assisters. The overwhelming number of call centers causes frustration, barriers to coverage, and delays in accessing needed care.

Fortunately, during summer 2015, the Governor's Office of Information Technology (OIT) convened several stakeholder meetings to develop a high-level implementation plan for an improved and integrated customer support model. Partial funding for the plan was included in the state's fiscal year 2016-17 budget to be implemented by mid-2017.

The integrated support model proposal calls for uniting call centers managed by the Colorado Department of Health Care Policy and Financing, Connect for Health Colorado, Colorado Department of Human Services, and county departments of human and social services, and technology support for the online application, the Colorado Program Eligibility and Application Kit or PEAK, under one main phone number.¹ Although the plan proposes that individual call centers will still exist, they would be integrated through a central repository that will help each call center track and transfer calls between each entity as needed. The integrated support model also proposes adding a new "level one" call center

that can take both client and eligibility technician calls, answer basic questions, and transfer the call to a subject matter expert at a level two or three call center when needed.

The integrated support model is an immediate opportunity for the state to improve customer support to Coloradans applying for health insurance affordability programs, and to the assisters who help them. As OIT further defines and implements the integrated support model, the following needs identified by CKF should be considered:

- Improve customer service quality
- Decrease call center wait times
- Provide multiple channels (e.g. phone, email, chat) for reaching customer support
- Allow call centers to transfer calls between each other
- Allow clients to provide a call-back number when call volume is high
- Improve access and quality of support for people with limited English proficiency and lawfully present immigrants
- Implement assister-specific support options

For more information on CKF's recommendation to prioritize the implementation of the integrated support model, as well as how the state can more generally improve customer service support for clients and assisters, please reference goals five (p. 37) and six (p. 40) in the full report, which can be found at <http://ckf.cchn.org/publications/the-maze/>.

¹ Governor's Office of Information Technology. (2015, November 1). R-02 CBMS/PEAK annual base adjustment request FY 2016-17 change request. Retrieved from https://drive.google.com/folderview?id=0B0TNL0CtD9wXWXlyMkj3UGpoQmc&usp=drive_web&tid=0B0TNL0CtD9wXfkEzLVwwVDg5M0xqakd0VFdsUnVVTjZXcXdKWk5VajM1LUJ2a3BQUUhMzA#list