

Inside eHHR

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VDSS Receives Innovation in Utilization Award

Earlier this month the Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) received a top honor at RichTech's 18th Annual Technology Stars Gala. VDSS was presented with the Innovation in Utilization Award, for creative use of existing technology, for the department's CommonHelp, a citizen portal that improves the efficiency and effectiveness of client applications. CommonHelp is a self-service website that allows residents to apply for benefits, check on the status of applications, renew benefits, and manage their benefit "accounts" online, 24 hours, 7 days a week.

Speaking about the award, Governor McDonnell said, "I commend VDSS for their commitment to finding innovative solutions for delivering core government services to citizens across the Commonwealth."

"The CommonHelp initiative is highly innovative because of the integration of the different technologies, software programs and legacy systems," said Margaret Ross Schultze, Commissioner for Virginia Department of Social Services. "The impact of this project is evident. For example, Fairfax County has gone from a 21-day wait for determining eligibility of SNAP benefits to a matter of minutes following an application being submitted via the CommonHelp system. This program allows even the most vulnerable citizens, including the disabled and seniors, to have access to services and makes it much easier to apply for public assistance."

Over 60,000 applications have been accepted in the nine months since the project launched and nearly 30 percent of all public assistance applications are being submitted online through CommonHelp. The enterprise customer portal saves citizens and local department staff time and speeds the process for eligibility determination.

CommonHelp can be used by citizens to apply for SNAP benefits, Medicaid, TANF, child care services and energy assistance. Citizens can apply for services from their homes, libraries, schools, or anywhere the Internet is available.

Instrumental to the oversight of CommonHelp were Deputy Commissioner, Donna Douglas and Chief Information Officer, Robert Hobbelman. The award was accepted by Deborah Vaughn and Kevin Platea (pictured above).

RichTech, Richmond's Technology Council, is a member-driven association of businesses and organizations working together to ensure the continued growth of central Virginia's dynamic technology-based economy. RichTech supports the growth of existing technology industries and identifies greater Richmond as the location of choice for new and emerging technology companies.



RichTech Awards

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DBHDS Pilot Underway for Electronic Health Record System

Following 18 months of collaboration, the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS) and Virginia Information Technologies Agency (VITA) awarded contracts to Siemens Medical Solutions USA, Inc., for an Electronic Health Record (EHR) system to serve Commonwealth agencies. DBHDS is now in the implementation phase of the EHR project, which has been named OneMind.

Implementation of OneMind will take place over a three-year period. Three hospitals, Eastern State Hospital, Western State Hospital, and Southwest Virginia Mental Health Institute will begin using OneMind during calendar year 2013. Two major releases are planned for these pilot hospitals, one in June of 2013 to qualify for federal Meaningful Use incentive payments, and a broader release with full system functionality in November of 2013.

Eleven hospitals will begin using the system during calendar 2014. This roll-out schedule of the full clinical system functionality implies that hospitals will come online at a rate of approximately one every four-to-six weeks during 2014. Revenue cycle (billing and reimbursement) components of OneMind will deploy to all 14 hospitals in calendar year 2015.

A tremendous amount of preparation in the form of education and analysis has already been accomplished at the pilot hospitals. Other facilities are in various stages of hospital readiness preparation. DBHDS is now moving on to additional implementation supports, including the formation of clinical decision teams, development of governance processes, stabilization of interdependent systems, development of interfaces, and the recruitment of new clinical support and helpdesk staff.

The vision behind OneMind is to foster a well-coordinated, high quality healthcare delivery organization and system that improves the lives of people with complex behavioral and developmental needs.

VITA Launches Shared Services Competency Center

In support of the eHHR Program, VITA is implementing a new suite of services based on well-established service oriented architecture (SOA) tools and concepts. VITA also is implementing an enterprise data management (EDM) service that will help bring the best information available about citizens directly to Commonwealth agencies.

The enterprise version of SOA will help facilitate the integration of computer applications between different agencies. Specifically for eHHR, this means that the transmission of large amounts of information between agencies is fast, secure and relatively low cost.

Another SOA tool is the decision rules engines. With this rules engine, agencies can adapt quickly to outside changes without relying on highly specialized (and difficult to find) computer specialists. Agencies can be more agile with less cost.

SOA functions also can be used at the agency level without the justification of an enterprise need. The EDM service uses information gathered from contributing agencies to come up with a best or most current view of a citizen. With better information, subscribing agencies can improve their own delivery of services to the citizen.

All of these new services are being designed with eHHR needs at the forefront. Technical and functional support for SOA and EDM services will come from VITA's shared services competency center. The competency center will create new environments, trouble-shoot problems, and provide initial guidance and best practices.

The SOA and EDM tools are ordinarily very expensive and not very affordable to agencies. By taking an enterprise approach to these 21st century capabilities, eHHR and VITA are making these services affordable and available to Commonwealth agencies to better the agencies and the citizens they serve.

Health Benefit Exchange Update

As directed by legislation enacted by Virginia's General Assembly, the State Corporation Commission's Bureau of Insurance will provide Plan Management under the Federally Facilitated Marketplace.

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