

# School Based Outreach Strategies



## Before School Starts

- Meet with school officials to get their endorsement of and cooperation with the project.
- Consider doing some outreach activities at all schools and more intensive outreach at selected schools.
- Identify who will provide application assistance to families — the Local Department of Social Services, trained volunteers, school staff, or other community programs.
- Design a way to track the success of your efforts and provide feedback to the schools, school administration, and organizations/individuals involved.
- Promote comprehensive awareness in the school system, inform: administrators, teachers, guidance counselors, school nurses, coaches, food service workers, human resources, etc.
- Train nurses/clinic workers, and other school staff to assist parents with the application (if feasible).
- Display posters and materials in visible areas: administrative offices, school clinic/nurse's office, locker rooms, teachers' lounge, cafeteria, etc.

## "Back-to-School" Campaign

- Put a general informational flyer in the first week backpack, include a local number where parents can call to learn more information.
- Get the principal to send a letter to parents stressing the importance of good health care to a child's academic success, the availability of FAMIS/Medicaid, and information about where parents can receive additional information and/or application assistance.
- Add questions to the student emergency card - *Does your child have health insurance? Would you like to be contacted to learn more about Virginia's free and low-cost health insurance programs?* Arrange for the emergency cards to be screened and follow up with families that expressed interest in the programs.
- Coordinate with the free/reduced-price school lunch program. Put the same insurance questions on a note stapled to the application (or use the federal application form that already has the questions) or mail a special flyer to the families approved for these services.
- Put up a table/display at the first PTA/PTO meeting to distribute material, make a brief presentation, collect names of people wanting additional information and/or application assistance, and recruit volunteers to help with your project.

## Throughout the School Year

- Repeat the message several times during the school year. Send additional flyers home around the winter holidays, cold & flu season, and spring break, or with report cards.
- Send information home with parental permission slip for sports.
- Put an article in the school or PTA/PTO newsletter(s).
- Give an incentive to students for spreading the word. If they take home a flyer, have their parents read and sign it, and return it, then they get a prize.
- Get a club/class or team (especially middle or high school students) to become advocates for health insurance and develop their own outreach strategy.
- Look for opportunities to coordinate outreach efforts with school events, like school physicals, kindergarten registration, parents' night, parent/teacher conferences, etc.