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### **South Carolina Department of Health and Human Services Successfully Launches Online Application**

*Total Medicaid applications submitted increased with introduction of online form*

**Columbia, SC** - On October 1, South Carolina Healthy Connections successfully launched our online application at [apply.scddhs.gov](http://apply.scddhs.gov), enabling us to streamline the application process and provide 24/7 online self-service. The first online application was submitted within the first hour of the site's launch, and in its first day more than 300 online applications were completed. Historically, Healthy Connections has helped potential beneficiaries complete approximately 1,000 paper applications each day. We have seen the 30 percent increase experienced day one maintained during this first week of the site's life, with each day's total applications averaging more than 1,300.

In addition, the implementation of an online application allows our eligibility workers to become a more mobile, community-based workforce so we can provide vital services to those who need them. We are now able to meet potential beneficiaries in their homes and communities, where we know health begins.

"This is what we have been working toward since the beginning," said Tony Keck, director of the South Carolina Department of Health and Human Services. "Each improvement we've made over the last several years has been a building block to get South Carolinians access to better care at a lower overall cost. This new online application is more convenient and accessible to those who need our service, enabling us to reach and improve the health of those who are already on our rolls. This enhanced access for those who already qualify does just that."

The online application is expected to improve program efficiencies, data collection and sharing, while allowing the state to integrate its Medicaid eligibility system with the federally-run health insurance marketplace when available.

The online application is just one of the steps to help modernize the South Carolina Medicaid eligibility system as we move from a largely paper-based approach. Not only does it free up our staff members, it provides a more customer-centric method to better serve our one million beneficiaries.

The first phase of our transition away from paper-based applications included the implementation of an electronic document management system. This system allows all eligibility-related documents to be scanned into a central location and accessed by eligibility staff statewide. This means documents can be retrieved as needed for processing, regardless of where the individual is located or the documents originated. This allows us to more quickly assist our beneficiaries who have moved from the county where their enrollment originated by eliminating the several days previously needed to physically transfer paperwork from one office location to another. Since all applications are put into a single system, counties in each region can share the cases/work among staff for quicker application processing.

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In addition, when Medicaid beneficiaries call or visit an eligibility office, they are freed from having to speak to their assigned caseworker. Now, any eligibility staff member can assist them. As of June 2013, all 46 counties use this process. We plan to expand our automated processes by applying it to renewal applications and moving managed care health plan selection online.

Health care is changing and it is important that we continue to implement innovative practices that provide a better quality of service to our customers and provide programs that positively impact the health of all South Carolinians. With these automated systems and improved processes, we can now meet potential beneficiaries in their homes and communities where we know health begins. We can help drive health outcomes by addressing the root cause of poor health and improve our ability to find citizens in need and coordinate all of their essentials – medical and social – that result in poor health and high costs.

SCDHHS is providing additional customer support to assist with the new online Medicaid application process. Call center staff has expanded their hours and are now available at 1 (888) 549-0820 from 8 a.m.-7 p.m. Monday-Friday and 8 a.m.-1 p.m. on Saturdays.

**About the South Carolina Department of Health and Human Services**

*The South Carolina Department of Health and Human Services provides health care benefits to more than one million South Carolinians. Its mission is to purchase the most health for our citizens in need at the least possible cost to the taxpayer.*

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