

Department of Vermont Health Access
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Contact: Mark Larson
Contact Phone Number: 802-879-5901
Contact E-mail Address: mark.larson@state.vt.us

Vermont Submits Request for Federal Grant for Development of State Health Benefit Exchange

WILLISTON –The Department of Vermont Health Access (DVHA) on June 29, 2012 submitted its Level Two Exchange Establishment Grant application for \$104.4 million to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). The Level Two Grant will support the continued planning, implementation, and operation of the state’s Health Benefit Exchange through 2014. Vermont’s Exchange is set to begin operation in October 2013 as required by the Affordable Care Act (ACA).

“I am pleased to give my overwhelming support for Vermont’s application,” said DVHA Commissioner Mark Larson. “Vermont has made significant progress in our work under our Level One Establishment grant, and we are well positioned to enter into this next phase of implementation.”

Vermont has met all milestones set forth by CMS for receiving the Level Two Establishment Grant, the third grant offered under the ACA. The Level Two Grant will support efforts like major IT systems development, education and training programs, and a strong evaluation strategy. Previously, Vermont received a Planning Grant in 2011 and is currently operating on funds from the Level One Exchange Establishment Grant.

“This marks an important step in the creation of the Exchange, and for Vermont’s health care reform efforts overall,” said Steve Kimbell, Department of Financial Regulation Commissioner. “We are committed to reducing health care costs while improving quality and access for all Vermonters.”

The Health Benefit Exchange is a marketplace for individuals, families, and small business to compare and purchase qualified private health insurance plans, determine eligibility for public health insurance plans, and access federal tax credits. The ACA requires all states to have Exchanges and sets forth certain requirements, but allows states flexibility in implementation. The Vermont legislature passed Act 48 in 2011 and Act 171 in 2012, authorizing the creation of the state’s Health Benefit Exchange within the Department of Vermont Health Access (DVHA), instituting changes to Vermont’s private health insurance market, and setting Vermont on its way towards a single-payer health care system.

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