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Department of Vermont Health Access
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Vermont's Health Benefit Exchange Receives Federal Approval
Vermont Health Connect on schedule to launch in October 2013

Press Conference with DVHA Commissioner Mark Larson and Director of Health Care Reform Robin Lunge to be held in DVHA Large Conference Room, 312 Hurricane Lane, Williston at 9am Friday January 4, 2013
Call-in option: (213) 289-0155, then enter 2100736

WILLISTON, VT – Today, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) announced that the State of Vermont has been granted conditional approval to operate its Health Benefit Exchange, Vermont Health Connect. This approval indicates that Vermont is compliant with federal regulations for operating a State-based Exchange and is prepared to begin open enrollment in October 2013, conditional on the State meeting specific milestones over the next nine months.

“Vermont continues to be a leader in health care reform, and this is another illustration of our progress toward meeting our reform goals,” said Governor Peter Shumlin. “We are building an Exchange that works for Vermonters now and in the future.”

Vermont Health Connect will be the marketplace for individuals, families, and small businesses to compare and purchase qualified private health insurance plans, determine eligibility for and enroll in public health insurance plans, and access tax credits and financial assistance to make insurance affordable.

HHS Secretary Kathleen Sebelius congratulated Vermont for demonstrating how it will meet all requirements of the federal Affordable Care Act for establishing a State-based Exchange. Today's approval indicates that the State has successfully met federal expectations and outlined plans for meeting additional federal requirements between now and October when the Exchange will open for shopping and enrollment. In addition, Vermont Health Connect will be uniquely tailored to Vermont. Secretary Sebelius' letter of approval can be found at <http://cciio.cms.gov/resources/files/vt-blueprint-exchange-letter-01-03-2013.pdf>

“We are dedicated to building an Exchange Vermonters can trust. I thank HHS for their partnership in the development of our application and am pleased to learn that they share our confidence in launching Vermont Health Connect later this year,” said Mark Larson, Commissioner of the Department of Vermont Health Access. “We have made significant progress towards creating Vermont Health Connect as a place where Vermonters can access affordable, comprehensive coverage. Secretary Sebelius has clearly outlined the conditions of our full approval, and I'm certain that we will meet all conditions by the federal deadline.”

Vermont is one of 19 states, plus the District of Columbia, to submit a standard “blueprint” application to construct and operate a State-based Exchange. As of now, conditional approval has been granted to all states that have submitted the “blueprint” application and full approval will be granted once all conditions are met.

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