



## Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) Reauthorization FAQs



### 1. What is CHIP? Why does it need to be reauthorized?

The Children's Health Insurance Program ("*CHIP*" for short) was established in 1997 to cover children whose families earn too much for Medicaid. In Virginia, we call CHIP "FAMIS." It provides health insurance to more than 68,000 Virginia children and almost 1,100 pregnant women ("*FAMIS MOMS*").

"Reauthorizing" means that Congress must decide whether to continue the program every 4 years. The deadline for 2017 reauthorization was September 30, but Congress missed it. If Congress does not vote to continue CHIP by January 31, 2018, the Virginia Department of Medical Assistance Services (*DMAS*) will have to end FAMIS/FAMIS MOMS.

### 2. Will Congress reauthorize CHIP soon?

CHIP has historically enjoyed broad, bipartisan support. Many in Congress have indicated support for CHIP in the past 6 months. There is simply disagreement about how to pay for it. It is likely that Congress will resolve this disagreement and reauthorize the program. Advocates should emphasize to families the importance of keeping their case information up-to-date so that when CHIP is reauthorized, a child's coverage will continue without any delays.

### 3. Will Medicaid coverage be affected?

No. This does not affect children with FAMIS Plus, also known as Children's Medicaid, or women enrolled in Medicaid for Pregnant Women. Medicaid is not affected by the delay in CHIP reauthorization. Only children and pregnant women in FAMIS or FAMIS MOMS will be impacted if Congress doesn't vote to continue the program in November.

### 4. Since the programs in Virginia are known as FAMIS and FAMIS Plus, how can a family know whether a child is enrolled in CHIP or Medicaid?

Enrolled families can call Cover Virginia at 1-855-242-8282. They should be ready to provide an address, social security number, and member ID number for verification.

### 5. If a child doesn't have insurance, should his/her family apply for FAMIS now? How?

Yes! Visit [www.coverva.org](http://www.coverva.org) for a list of ways to apply. If a family would like in-person assistance with an application, visit <http://www.vhcf.org/looking-for-help/health-insurance/child-health-insurance/project-connect/> to see if a *Project Connect* Outreach Worker covers their locality.

### 6. A family's renewal is due soon. Should they wait to renew until after CHIP gets reauthorized?

No, it is important to renew on time to avoid a lapse in coverage. This way, when Congress *does* vote to reauthorize CHIP, families will not experience a delay in keeping their children's coverage.

Families can renew online using CommonHelp, via phone by calling the Cover Virginia call center at 1-855-242-8282, or by using a paper renewal form and mailing it to their local Department of Social Services. Families might also be renewed automatically, in which case they will receive a notice in the mail letting them know their case is now active until 2018.

### 7. A member of my family is on FAMIS or FAMIS MOMS. Is it ok to schedule doctor appointments?

Yes! By all means! Continue to use your benefits. Keep going to the doctor as you normally would. If you think your child or the pregnant woman in your family will need a medical appointment or prescription, be sure to schedule any appointments prior to February 1, just in case funding is not extended before January 31, 2018.