

3 South Street
Concord, NH 03301
Voice: 603-228-2830
Fax: 603-228-2464



61 Elm Street
Montpelier, VT 05602
Voice: 802-229-0002
Fax: 802-223-2336

www.bistatepca.org

To: Jim Hester, Director, Health Care Reform Commission
From: Denis Barton, VT Director of Public Policy
Date: January 11, 2010
Re: Healthy Farm Worker Program / VT Farm Health Connection

The Farm Health Connection funded by HRSA through Bi-State, began operations in July 2009 with consortium partners the Open Door Clinic (ODC) in Addison County and the Northern Tier Center for Health (NoTCH) in Franklin and Grand Isle Counties. ODC had already provided some services to the farmworker population, and the VT Farm Health Connection represented an expansion of existing services. NoTCH had not provided dedicated services to this population in the past and consequently has required a longer planned ramp-up period.

During the first half of Year 1 (July 2009 to January 2010), ODC has provided primary care, health education, and/or vaccination services to 100+ farmworkers (providing 40+ vaccinations, including Tdap, Hep B, Seasonal Flu, and H1N1). These dedicated clinics have been scheduled to coincide with Mexican Consulate visits and/or to occur at other locations accessible to the population. Additionally, ODC has developed a dental voucher program in which a local Middlebury dentist and the VT Technical College School of Dental Hygiene have both agreed to provide dental care to referred patients at pre-negotiated rates. In November 2009 NoTCH provided outreach at a Middlebury Mexican Consulate visit, and in January 2010, NoTCH will begin monthly clinics for immigrant farmworkers in Franklin and Grand Isle Counties.

In addition to the services provided and detailed above, Bi-State and the consortium members spent the first half of Year 1 on start-up activities (e.g., MOAs, the hiring of staff, research of best practices, evaluation design). These activities are almost exclusively complete, and the project will begin operating at capacity during the second half of Year 1. In summary:

- Bi-State has executed MOAs with clinical consortium members ODC and NoTCH;
- Bi-State has executed a MOA with Farm Health Connection evaluator John Snow Incorporated Research and Training Institute (JSI);
- Bi-State is in the final stages of negotiating a MOA with needs assessment contractor, the University of Vermont;
- All consortium member organizations are fully staffed for this project;
- Consortium members have met monthly, in person or by teleconference;
- ODC has established an affiliation agreement with the University of Vermont College of Medicine for the inclusion of residents in Farm Health Collection primary care clinics to conduct primary care services and to provide health education and screenings;
- ODC and NoTCH have established an affiliation agreement with the University of Vermont Department of Nursing for the inclusion of undergraduate nursing students in both organizations' primary care clinics;
- ODC has executed a MOA with a local dentist to initiate the dental voucher program;

- NoTCH has begun cultural competency trainings for staff in December 2009; and
- Project staff from Bi-State, ODC, and NoTCH together visited the CT River Valley Farmworker Health Program in October 2009 and attended a simulated farmworker clinic at UConn Health Center with student coordinators from the UConn Migrant Farmworker Clinics to learn best practices of mobile clinics at farms and of voucher programs.

Consortium members are in discussion with the VT Department of Health to determine areas in which VDH support would be appropriate.

The Vermont Farm Health Connection anticipates receiving federal funding for three years (May 2009-April 2012). During Year 2 of the program, and upon receiving the results of the contracted needs assessment, consortium members anticipate selecting a third clinical consortium member to demonstrate that the model of services is replicable. Sustainability planning (potentially in the form of an FQHC 330(g) Migrant and Seasonal Farm Worker funding) will be another focus of Year 2-3 activities.

Please direct any questions to Kate Simmons, Bi-State Manager of VT Operations (ksimmons@bistatepca.org; 802-229-0002 ext. 217)