

INSURE MORE PEOPLE

Touched by *Angel*

Family Benefits from Outreach Worker's Help by Tammie Mullins-Rice

Mr. Tyron Riddick made a decent living and his income was adequate to meet his basic needs – housing, utilities and food.

However, after gaining custody of his daughter Amiah, Mr. Riddick faced a new challenge – healthcare for his family. Health insurance was a luxury he could not afford.

When Amiah got sick, Mr. Riddick took her to the hospital and was not prepared for the numerous bills he would receive from the hospital, doctors and radiology. "I did not have the insurance when I needed it," said Mr. Riddick.

Amiah's medical condition requires prescription medication. Without insurance, Mr. Riddick could not afford the medication and the prescription lapsed.

Amiah's school and teachers were concerned and referred Mr. Riddick to Social Services to apply for FAMIS. He attempted to navigate this process on his own and his application was denied twice. The process was very confusing until he received a call from Angel Choate, who is a FAMIS Outreach Specialist at Suffolk Department of Social Services. Angel's position is funded by a grant from the Obici Healthcare Foundation.

As an Outreach Specialist, Angel helps eligible people new to the community and families with children in Suffolk Public Schools obtain FAMIS.

Angel noticed that several documents were missing from Mr. Riddick's application, the addition of which could possibly overturn the denied application. Mr. Riddick recalls Angel saying, "Get me the documents and we'll make it work" and she did, she made it happen."

Once Mr. Riddick secured the required paperwork, Angel was able to file the application, get an approved status for FAMIS and prevent the medical bills from going to collection.

The big winner in all of this was Amiah, because now that she has insurance – she has a primary care physician, receives dental care, and more importantly, gets back on her medication. Amiah's concentration and behavior has improved in school as well as her grades. She's earning A's and B's.

"...Mr. Riddick faced a new challenge – healthcare. Health insurance was a luxury he could not afford."

Suffolk Department of Social Services FAMIS Outreach Specialist Angel Choate (right) helps Tyron Riddick obtain health insurance for his daughter Amiah. After failed attempts to obtain children's healthcare insurance on his own, he turned to Angel who successfully enrolled Amiah in FAMIS.



FAMIS Helps Children Be Successful in the Classroom

By Clarissa McAdoo

Health insurance, education and young children all have a common thread that connects them. That thread is FAMIS, a form of health insurance for children and pregnant women who are in need of affordable access to healthcare.

FAMIS (or Family Access to Medical Insurance Security) covers the costs of doctor visits, well-baby checkups, hospital emergencies, prescription medications, necessary vaccinations for children to attend school and several other health-related costs.

Many families who are eligible for FAMIS do not take advantage of its essential benefits that could make a positive difference in their child's life. People are afraid of the unknown and have trust issues on many levels. Lack of information and not fully understanding causes families to be reluctant in signing up for FAMIS.

Children may be eligible for FAMIS if they are under the age of 19; live in Virginia; do not have health insurance or have not had it in the past four months; are not eligible for Virginia state employee health insurance plan; and live in families meeting the income guidelines. A family of four can make as much as \$46,100 and still qualify for FAMIS.

In order for a child to properly learn and absorb the information given to them, they must have their full attention on what is being taught. When a child is feverish and hunched over on his or her desk, trying to cope with a behavioral health matter, squinting to see the chalkboard or barely stay awake, they are not processing anything the teacher is saying. They are too preoccupied with physical or emotional problems to learn.

FAMIS is available so that occurrences like this will not hinder a child's education. "In 2013 there should not be ANY child who is without

"In 2013 there should not be ANY child who is without health insurance. I encourage every parent or guardian to move past their fears and do what is necessary to ensure that their child will have a bright and healthy future."

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Clarissa McAdoo is the newest member of the Obici Healthcare Foundation Board of Directors.



HOW TO APPLY FOR FAMIS

There are easy ways to apply for FAMIS and FAMIS MOMS. You will need to complete a Health Insurance Application for Children and Pregnant Women and share information on who is in your family and your family's income. Contact:

ANGEL CHOATE

SUFFOLK DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES, SERVING SUFFOLK

757-514-7367

CHRISTINA WATTS

SMART BEGINNINGS WESTERN TIDEWATER, SERVING CITY OF FRANKLIN AND SOUTHAMPTON COUNTY

757-562-8770

Benefits Program Outreach Specialist

ISLE OF WIGHT DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES, SERVING ISLE OF WIGHT COUNTY

757-365-0880

ONLINE: http://www.famis.org/applying_online.cfm

TELEPHONE: 1-866-87FAMIS (1-866-873-2647)

8:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., Monday - Friday

9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon, Saturday

With completed applications and documents mail to:

FAMIS

P.O. Box 1820

Richmond, VA 23218-1820