

Streamlining the Enrollment Process for California's Healthy Families Program

The Issue

California's Healthy Families Program is a low-cost insurance program that provides health, dental, and vision coverage to children who do not have insurance and who do not qualify for no-cost Medi-Cal coverage. Due to recent changes in the law, the California Managed Risk Medical Insurance Board (MRMIB), which operates Healthy Families, needed to streamline the enrollment process to mitigate the number of potential enrollees lost due to their failure to submit health, dental, and/or vision plan selections with their application or as a part of the Missing Information (MI) process. Previously, when the applicant did not provide their plan selections with their initial application, or subsequently through the MI process, the application was denied. This led to a number of denials and also lengthened the delay in enrollment to up to two months from the original receipt of the application.



The Challenge

Automating the enrollment process and plan selection for the applicant appeared to be a viable solution, but it also created a dilemma. For many of the applicants, there were several health plans available to them in the locations in which they lived. The automated process needed to assign the respective plan fairly and equitably, while ensuring that the assigned plan was actually available in the different locales. Additionally, when two or more plan options were available for a coverage type, the automated process would require assigning alternate plans to ensure equitable distribution of families among the plans at the county level. MRMIB also wanted to eliminate the requirement for the first month's premium with the application.

The Solution

To help MRMIB find a solution, MAXIMUS first gathered the data to identify the impact plan selection had on delaying enrollment, as well as the percentage denied when the applicant did not respond. Using the data provided by MAXIMUS, MRMIB determined that automating the enrollment process would greatly reduce the denials and delays for enrollment into the California Healthy Families Program.

The MAXIMUS solution included the creation of an Automatic and Equitable Assignment of Plan (AEAP) process. This process is able to choose the plans automatically and equitably without omitting some of the smaller plans and those with restrictions. To equally choose between the available plans, the AEAP process places the most chosen plan on the bottom of the list and searches for the least chosen plan before presenting the enrollee's available plan options. The MAXIMUS solution also enhanced the California Healthy Families Program eligibility system to accommodate modifying the communication process with the applicant regarding plan selection. This included the development of a complex algorithm to meet the challenge of ensuring equitable distribution of families among the plans when originally, the process arbitrarily, but not necessarily equally, selected a plan for them.

“MAXIMUS worked diligently and efficiently to get the process changed. Because any delays in implementation would negatively affect the members, MAXIMUS efficiency in getting it completed was outstanding.”

—Janette Lopez, Chief Deputy Director, MRMIB

The Outcome

The MAXIMUS solution resulted in an immediate return on investment for MRMIB and quick compliance with the new law. The implementation, coupled with the waiver of the first month's premium, resulted in a 16 percent increase in enrollment in the first six months of 2007, compared to the prior six months of 2006. The percentage of applications that had been denied due to no response from the applicant was also reduced by more than eight percent.

Fewer denials and delayed enrollments resulted in fewer client service inquiries to the California Healthy Families Program by telephone or by mail, creating a direct cost-savings. MRMIB was also satisfied with the way the solution ensured equitable distribution to health plans amongst families when they were alternately assigned, a factor that helped to strengthen their relationships with stakeholders.

To learn how to streamline the enrollment process in your state, visit us at www.maximus.com or contact us at 1.866.688.3177. You may also email us at schip@maximus.com.



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