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### **Gov. Shumlin Makes Announcement on Vermont Health Connect**

**MONTPELIER** – Expressing continued frustration with on-going delays and technical problems with Vermont Health Connect’s website enrollment process, Gov. Peter Shumlin today announced additional options that will provide peace of mind to Vermonters as the website continues to improve. Vermont small businesses will now have the additional option of enrolling in VHC plans directly through Blue Cross or MVP. Alternatively, individuals and small businesses will have the option to continue coverage through their existing plans until March 31<sup>st</sup> as necessary. Anyone may enroll in Vermont Health Connect at any point before that date.

Appearing with the Governor to announce the changes were legislative leaders, the heads of Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Vermont and MVP, as well as navigator organizations like the Lake Champlain Chamber of Commerce and the Vermont and the Vermont Campaign for Health Care Security.

“The purpose of Vermont Health Connect is to simplify the process of buying insurance for Vermonters. I won’t tolerate a situation where Vermonters go into the holiday season worried and confused by their health care options come January 1st. That is simply unacceptable,” the Governor said. “Today I am taking steps to ensure that won’t happen. While thousands of Vermonters have signed up for coverage through Vermont Health Connect, many others have been frustrated by technology glitches. It is possible those technology errors will be fixed in a matter of weeks, but multiple missed deadlines and failed technology fixes in my judgment require us to implement this plan.”

Under the plan announced today:

**For Small Businesses:** Small businesses would continue to be able to enroll in VHC plans through the website, a navigator, paper application, or over the phone. Alternatively, businesses will have the option of enrolling in VHC plans directly through Blue Cross and MVP. Current plans for small businesses may extend through March 31<sup>st</sup> as necessary.

**For Individuals and Families:** They will be able to keep their existing coverage through March 31, or enroll in VHC at any point before that date.

Gov. Shumlin spoke to the head of CGI, the lead contractor charged with creating and maintaining the VHC website. The Governor has outlined his concerns with the system, informed the company of the plan being implemented, insisting that pressure on CGI to solve the problems becomes more urgent with each passing day, and reiterated that the state expects to pursue its remedies regarding the financial penalties outlined in the contract.

“No one has been more frustrated and angry than me about the pace of progress in enabling Vermonters to choose and sign up for affordable, quality health coverage. The most important step we can take immediately is to ensure the system is fully operable as quickly as possible,” the Governor said. “While I am confident that Vermont Health Connect will be a success and we will get past this temporary transition, I will not let uncertainty on this front drag on.”

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