

**From:** Evelyn Dortch [evelyn@wvdawg.org]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 05, 2007 12:05 PM  
**To:** 'Perry Bryant'  
**Subject:** 1 of 2 articles you can include



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## **Kaiser Daily Health Policy Report**

**Wednesday, August 15, 2007**

### **Medicaid**

## **Few Enroll in West Virginia Enhanced Medicaid Benefits Pilot Project**

About 7% of eligible residents in three West Virginia counties have enrolled in the state's enhanced benefits Medicaid pilot project since February, according to agency records from mid-July, the [Charleston Gazette](#) reports (Caron, *Charleston Gazette*, 8/13).

Under the program, called Mountain Health Choices, beneficiaries are eligible to receive enhanced benefits in exchange for signing contracts that pledge healthy behavior, such as regular physician visits and use of necessary medications. The program offers options to help beneficiaries maintain a healthy lifestyle through weight management, cardiac rehabilitation and nutritional education programs. The goal of the program is to improve state residents' overall health and reduce the long-term costs of Medicaid ([Kaiser Daily Health Policy Report](#), 7/25).

The program requires beneficiaries to meet with their health care provider within 90 days of the annual re-determination date to sign the agreement. Beneficiaries who do not sign an agreement will be enrolled in a basic Medicaid plan that provides fewer benefits, limits the number of covered monthly prescriptions to four and does not provide coverage for cardiac rehabilitation or smoking cessation classes.

The first enrollment deadline for the program was Aug. 1. Health care advocates maintain that few residents enrolled in the enhanced benefits program because outreach efforts have been inadequate and that the state has not made clear how it will hold individuals accountable for adhering to the contracts. Shannon Riley, spokesperson for the state Medicaid program, said many people are not yet aware of the program because it is new. The [Direct Action Welfare Group](#) plans to begin outreach efforts in the pilot counties to increase awareness. Enrollment for the program opens again next year (*Charleston Gazette*, 8/13).

