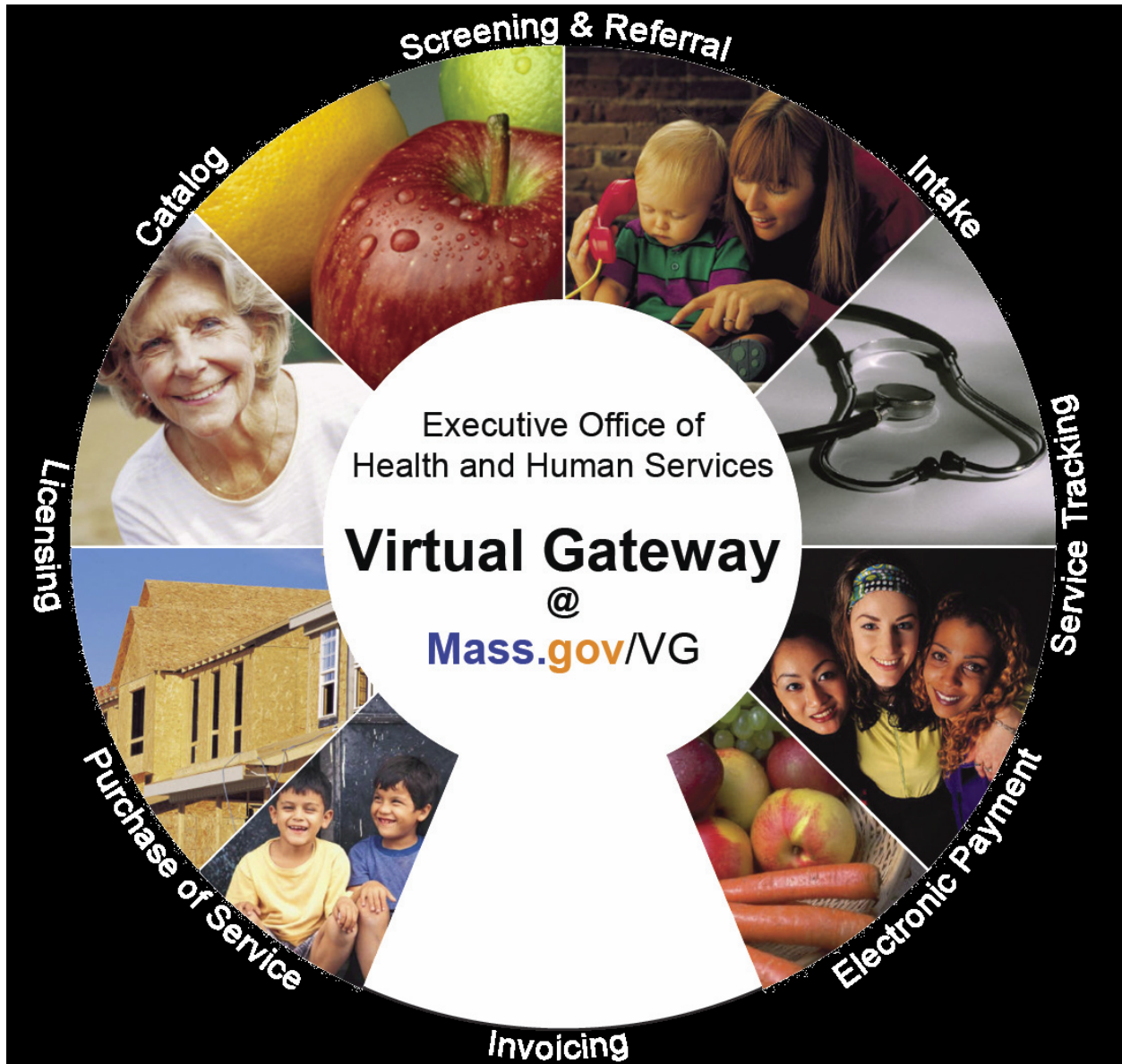


A. Cover Page

TITLE: Massachusetts Executive Office of Health and Human Services' Virtual Gateway

CATEGORY: Cross-Boundary Collaboration and Partnerships

STATE: Massachusetts



B. Executive Summary

The Virtual Gateway is the business center for the Massachusetts' Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS) that provides the general public, medical providers, community-based organizations, and EOHHS agencies with online access to health and human services through a single web portal. By consolidating information and online services in a single location on the internet, the Virtual Gateway streamlines and simplifies the process of connecting people to critical health and human services programs and information.

One of the Virtual Gateway's flagship services is Common Intake which enables registered users to help individuals and families throughout the Commonwealth apply for multiple health and human services through an integrated application. With services ranging from health care coverage and food stamps benefits to child development screenings and long-term care referrals, providers can use the Virtual Gateway to enroll people in as many diverse programs and services for which they are eligible and in need.

The Virtual Gateway also gives providers, organizations, and government agencies better management and reporting tools, allowing them to deliver services to their clients more quickly, efficiently and cost-effectively. Some of the many services available through the Virtual Gateway include:

- Provider Data Management: This tool allows Purchase of Service providers to view, upload and edit information commonly requested by EOHHS agencies in a single location. It also provides agencies with a single place to view provider information and approve provider contracting decisions, an important aspect of EOHHS business.
- Enterprise Invoice Management/Enterprise Service Management: This billing and reporting service streamlines invoice submission, approval and payment via the Internet for Purchase of Service providers.
- Mental Retardation Quality Management Reporting: This quality management service allows registered Department of Retardation staff and providers to file clinical information and reports on incidents, investigations, medication issues, and restraint utilizations.
- Senior Information Management System: This is a data collection, case management, and reporting tool for Executive Office of Elder Affairs staff and providers. It enables users to track various programs for elders, including intake and referral, home care services, nutrition screenings, clinical assessments, and more.
- Service and Transition Planning: This tool for registered Department of Social Services staff and providers supports collaborative treatment planning and referral services for certain children and families served by EOHHS.
- Statewide Homeless Operations Research Environment: This data collection, case management, and reporting tool allows the Department of Transitional Assistance to meet HUD data collection requirements.

The Virtual Gateway creates a critical bridge that links individuals with the services they need. It has reduced the amount of time it takes to apply for services and receive eligibility determinations, and has expedited over half a million applications for services from individuals and families. The Virtual Gateway has improved case management and service delivery for some of the Commonwealth's most vulnerable residents.

C. Description of the Business Problem and Solution

Launched in 2004, the Virtual Gateway is an excellent example of how multiple government agencies can work together to meet common goals – providing a single point of access to services, promoting worker productivity, extending access to applicant information to the applicants themselves, and strengthening the relationship between the Commonwealth and its many community partners, including hospitals, community health centers, and homeless shelters.

Currently, more than 23,000 individuals and more than 1,600 provider organizations across the Commonwealth use the Virtual Gateway to conduct business with EOHHS and deliver needed services to the Commonwealth's constituencies.

Problem for Agencies: Prior to the Virtual Gateway, most of EOHHS' work was processed using paper. There was no way of submitting billing electronically or seeing all provider information in a single location. Many agencies did not have the resources to build their own web-based system, as it requires time, money, people and expertise. While a few agencies had electronic systems, most were not web-based, limiting workers from accessing information from outside of their office. This posed particular challenges for agencies whose main focus is serving individuals in their communities, such as the Department of Social Services serving foster children or the Department of Mental Retardation serving individuals in residence facilities.

Solution for Agencies: The Virtual Gateway's web-based platform allows agency workers to access the Virtual Gateway and their needed application as long as they have a computer with an Internet connection. Because of the Virtual Gateway's shared infrastructure and security system, individual agencies do not need to devote resources to building and maintaining their own technological platform and support services.

Problem for Providers: Before the Virtual Gateway, providers were required to use varying paper processes for each type of work they did with each individual agency. This system was challenging to navigate for the many providers who contract or plan to contract with state agencies. Different reporting and regulatory requirements further complicated their interaction with the state.

Solution for Providers: Various services on the Virtual Gateway have been designed to simplify and streamline the provision of service to and from providers:

- Enterprise Invoice/Service Management (EIM/ESM) provides a unified application for providers to submit reporting and invoicing information to various agencies, and in turn, receive payments much more quickly.
- Common Intake allows providers to use a single application to assist their clients in applying for multiple health and human service programs. This eliminates the need to fill out numerous paper applications most of which require duplicative information. Furthermore, the My Account Page feature allows providers to access their client's application and benefit status at any hour of the day and in real-time.
- Provider Data Management (PDM) allows providers to view, upload and edit information commonly requested by EOHHS agencies in a single online location.

Thanks to the Virtual Gateway's Security Single Sign-On (SSSO), providers who use multiple services or have multiple accounts on the Virtual Gateway only need one User ID to access all services available to them.

D. Significance to the Improvement of the Operation of Government

In 2003, Massachusetts initiated a dramatic re-organization of its human service system. This reorganization improved the quality of and access to state benefits and streamlined service delivery to clients. As part of this re-organization, EOHHS was consolidated from 17 agencies into 4 clusters organized around client needs and designed to simplify support mechanisms particularly technology. The Virtual Gateway was a major part of this reorganization effort, and part of the Commonwealth's commitment to "using technology well to connect existing systems, to build more accessible system for clients, and leverage information technology to provide virtual accessibility to services."

The Virtual Gateway is at the core of this technology simplification. The Virtual Gateway is a central tool in integrating business processes across EOHHS agencies and in meeting the objectives of improving access, efficiency, funding and service delivery. The Virtual Gateway:

- Provides a single point of access to EOHHS clients and providers
- Empowers both agency and provider staff with access to information and service in any location with a computer and Internet connection
- Enables consolidation and improvement of key business and administrative processes
- Provides information for managing across programs and agencies

Additionally, in 2006 Massachusetts passed landmark health reform legislation, and the Virtual Gateway has played a pivotal role in its success as a method to connect people to critical health services, streamline the application processes and simplify the administrative eligibility determination practices.

The efficiency of the Common Intake service on the Virtual Gateway, for example, has enabled enrollment for the hundreds of thousands of individuals who have applied for MassHealth, Massachusetts' Medicaid program, and Commonwealth Care, a state-subsidized health insurance program for low- and moderate-income residents, as a result of efforts under health care reform. The Common Intake service provides a foundation upon which new tools continue to be built, and it is these additions that allow the Commonwealth to ensure that the ever increasing number of people applying for health and human services receive them as quickly and efficiently as possible.

This year marked the introduction of the new feature My Account Page (MAP) on Common Intake. MAP provides real-time access to member and applicant health assistance information. It allows providers to view information about a specific member or applicant's household, his or her application and benefit status, and upcoming renewal dates on a single screen.

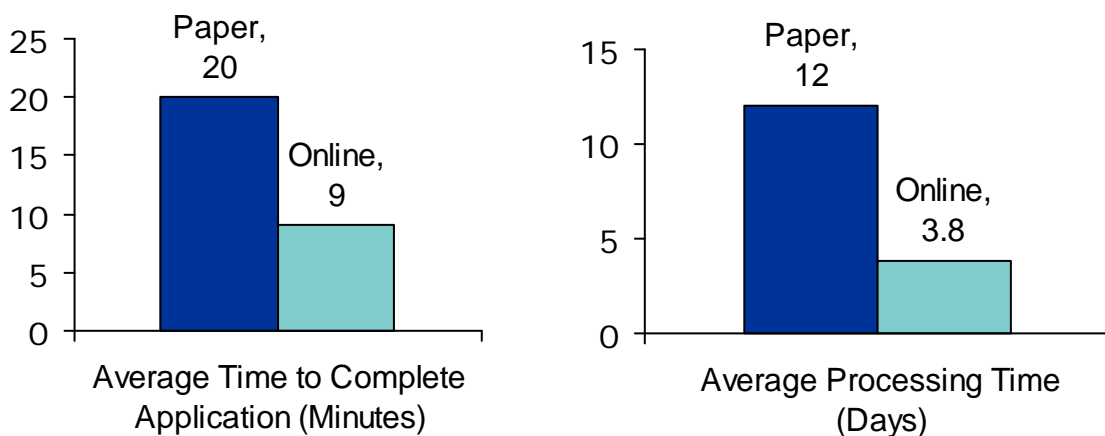
MAP expedites and streamlines the eligibility and coverage determination process. Providers can check MAP before submitting a health assistance application to ensure that no pending applications already exist for that client. If one exists, MAP indicates to the provider whether any documentation still needs to be submitted in order to finalize the application. This process

not only prevents duplicate applications, but also reduces calls to MassHealth to obtain this information and allows the provider to assist the individual in finalizing the application with any required materials.

The Virtual Gateway, with all of its applications and services, is truly changing the way the Commonwealth serves providers and clients, while setting a precedent for other states and agencies to follow. Web-based applications facilitate the delivery of health and human services, and the Virtual Gateway gives agencies access to this technology that they might not have had on their own, as developing a separate web-based platform for each agency would require extensive resources. The Virtual Gateway has allowed EOHHS agencies to revolutionize their business practices and delivery of services, helping the Commonwealth ensure that the landmark legislation it passed is not only implemented, but ultimately successful.

E. Benefits of the Project

Improved Service Delivery: The Virtual Gateway has expedited over half a million electronic applications for services since its launch in 2004. In 2007, over 150,000 families were screened for eligibility through Common Intake, and of those who applied, those who qualified were eligible for over \$650 million in services delivered by the Commonwealth. Furthermore, the impact of the Virtual Gateway on the efficiency of service delivery is clear as the time it takes for a provider to complete an application has dropped by 55% and the time it takes for a citizen to receive a healthcare determination dropped by 68%.



Shared Technological Platform: Agencies within EOHHS benefit through having this shared infrastructure of the Virtual Gateway. Often times, separate agencies build specific applications to meet their current needs, resulting in time, money and people being spent and used to duplicate existing functionality. As part of the Virtual Gateway Service Oriented Architecture (SOA), however, all services on the Virtual Gateway share an enterprise security service, preventing agencies from having to develop and maintain their own security systems for their applications. The Virtual Gateway allows all of the agencies to share the burden of licensing fees and building costs, cutting the expense of development and allowing them to implement the systems with a lower overhead.

Streamlined Administrative Practices: The Virtual Gateway houses multiple health and human service applications in programs in one location, allowing various processes to be simplified and streamlined:

- A single customer service phone number supports all Virtual Gateway applications. All calls are directed to the Virtual Gateway's Customer Service Team, who either assist callers with their inquiries directly or redirect them to the appropriate agency contact. This system prevents providers from having to determine whom to contact and saves agencies from having to expend resources developing redundant call centers.
- The Virtual Gateway's Security Singly Sign-On permits the user who has multiple Virtual Gateway accounts to have one Virtual Gateway sign-on. This feature allows providers to have a single User ID and password even if they use several of the Virtual Gateway's services and prevents EOHHS from having to process multiple forms and keep track of multiple accounts for a single user.

More Rapid Payment to Providers: Enterprise Invoice/Service Management (EIM/ESM) is an Internet billing and reporting service on the Virtual Gateway that streamlines invoice submission, approval and payment via the Internet for Purchase of Service providers. EIM/ESM will streamline and modernize \$2.1 billion in contract management and invoicing processes for over 800 Purchase of Service providers and 12 state agencies. It offers state agencies and local providers a number of advantages, including real-time invoice processing, improved financial management, and a reduction in the time it takes for providers to receive payment. Before EIM/ESM, the time from provider's invoice submission to payment averaged 31 days. EIM/ESM has decreased that cycle by 70 percent to an average of 9 days, further strengthening the financial integrity of the Commonwealth's provider network.

These benefits reinforce the Virtual Gateway's success as a bridge between social service agencies and providers, where a client can have their needs met in one place. Moreover, the Virtual Gateway continues to build on the foundation of success as more agencies, programs and business services are introduced. It has truly become a single point of access for social service programs in the Commonwealth through successfully integrating the technology capabilities of the private industry with the mission and daily functioning of social services agencies.