



VOLUNTEER RISK AND PROGRAM MANAGEMENT: **VISION GUIDE**

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Introduction

The Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP) program was founded on the vision of Senator Tom Harkin that retired senior volunteers could be trained to educate their peers about ways to prevent and identify Medicare fraud. In fact, Senator Harkin believed that such senior volunteers may serve as the best defense against health care fraud, waste and abuse. Today, over 15 years after Senator Harkin's vision was first demonstrated in five states and found to hold real promise, the SMP program has grown to a national, visible, and respected partner in the fight against health care fraud. The evolution and growth of the program has brought expectations for greater consistency, quality, accountability and results from SMP projects across the country. But one thing has not changed-- and that is that the program today, just as in Senator Harkin's vision, is founded on a trained, committed, and trustworthy volunteer workforce upon which the program relies to spread the message of health care fraud prevention throughout local communities.

At this point in the SMP program's evolution, the Administration on Aging has stopped to take stock of where the program stands – the opportunities available to us as well as the risks we face – and has determined that both our greatest opportunities and our greatest challenges center around how we train, screen, manage and support our SMP volunteers. We have already initiated, in coordination with the SMP Resource Center, an excellent training program to enhance consistency of knowledge and skills of both volunteers and staff. And now it is time to strengthen other key elements in the management of our volunteer program infrastructure so that we produce safe and effective services for beneficiaries, rewarding opportunities for our volunteers, exemplary local programs and collaborations with an array of community partners, all guided by a supportive and unified national program.

So with this document, we share with you a new SMP program vision....one developed to acknowledge the realities of today's environment of greater visibility and higher expectations for the SMP program, expanded involvement of volunteers, increasing proliferation of individuals intent on illegally profiting from our elders and the programs that serve them, expanded use of technology to track benefits and payments, and much more. Yet in many ways, the vision of the Volunteer Risk and Program Management Project takes us back to the most basic elements upon which the SMP program is based:

The Vision of the Volunteer Risk and Program Management Project is to create a volunteer program infrastructure for SMP that promotes safer and more effective volunteer involvement and is more responsive to changing needs.

AoA, in coordination with the SMP Resource Center, as well as our Steering Committee partners, are pleased to share this Vision Guide for the Volunteer Risk and Program Management project—the vehicle through which we intend to achieve this important vision.

Barbara Dieker
Director, Office of Elder Rights, AoA

The SMP Volunteer Risk and Program Management Project

The Volunteer Risk and Program Management (VRPM) project was initiated in 2010. Its origin was based on a number of factors:

- growth of SMP programs
- increased awareness about risks related to volunteer involvement
- the need to adapt to a changing environment for volunteering
- the higher profile of the SMP program
- higher standards and greater accountability both in the courts and in public opinion

All of these factors suggested the wisdom of taking a new and close look at the way that SMP was engaging volunteers and finding ways to strengthen the management of the SMP volunteer involvement system.

While no crisis existed, it was clear that SMP had reached a stage of growth where reviewing its internal volunteer program management processes was desirable both to avoid problems and to lay the foundation for future growth.

The Volunteer Risk and Program Management project is a three-year effort. Its key leadership consists of:

- Direction and oversight by the Director of Office of Elder Rights, Administration on Aging (AoA)
- A Steering Committee of SMP representatives – SMP programs, AOA Project Officer, SMP Resource Center – who provide overall advice to the Administration on Aging for the VRPM project
- Consultants from Linda Graff and Associates Inc. who provide technical support and expertise
- A Review Team of SMP field representatives who will review materials for field suitability

SMP Steering Committee

Barbara Dieker, AoA
Courtney Hoskins, AoA
Darrell Elliott, KS SMP
Erin Weir, IL SMP
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Steve McCurley, Consultant

Linda Graff and Associates, Inc.

Linda Graff and Steve McCurley are internationally renowned experts in risk and volunteer program management. Between them they have over 60 years of experience in working with volunteer programs, have authored over 25 books on volunteer involvement, provided training for over 500,000 managers of volunteers, and worked with hundreds of organizations around the world to improve their volunteer programs. You can find out more about them at www.lindagraff.ca.

What We've Done So Far

The Steering Committee is happy to outline what we have done so far and our vision for the future.

Vision of the Volunteer Risk and Program Management (VRPM) Project

To create a volunteer program infrastructure for SMP that promotes safer and more effective volunteer involvement and is more responsive to changing needs

The Volunteer Risk and Program Management Project is an evidence-based effort. Initial activities consisted of:

- The VRPM project began with the application of a systematic risk identification and management system to volunteer involvement in SMPs. The process involved the identification of a wide range of risks related to volunteer involvement, the evaluation of identified risks, and the construction of risk control and mitigation strategies that, together, reduce risks to a tolerable level. The first product from this process was a comprehensive list of risks of varying magnitude related to SMP's involvement of volunteers. It formed the basis for assessing the overall nature and extent of risks faced across the SMP program and has been pivotal in the development of risk management policies and procedures for the SMP program. To see the list of risks, [click here](#), or visit www.smpresource.org > Resources for SMPs > VRPM Implementation > VRPM Background > VRPM Project > chart of SMP volunteer program risks.
- The SMP Resource Center did surveys and collected data about volunteer involvement practices and volunteer demographics among SMP programs. In January 2011 we conducted a survey of program practices and relationships with local partner organizations. To see the survey results, [click here](#), or visit www.smpresource.org > VRPM Implementation > VRPM Background > VRPM Project > results of surveys conducted with SMPs.
- At SMP Regional Conferences in 2010, the VRPM project sought input from SMP program directors and staff about potential areas of risk in involving volunteers and about volunteer program practices.
- VRPM project leadership examined the data about SMP program practices and compared what is happening in SMP with other organizations that involve volunteers. Comparator organizations included SHIP, the Long Term Care Ombudsman Program, Volunteers in Tax Assistance, Court Appointed Special Advocates, AARP money management programs, hospice programs and others.

What We've Done So Far, continued

The conclusions based on the examination of comparator data were that:

- there are significant risks in SMPs related to their engagement of volunteers
- little formal risk management is in place to mitigate these risks
- **many, if not most, SMP programs are currently behind the curve in volunteer management practices compared to other organizations working with similar clients, but has the opportunity to quickly remedy this situation and become a program role model.**

Specifically, SMP is behind similar volunteer programs in the following areas:

- a focus on identifying and managing risks related to volunteer involvement, including screening and supervising volunteers
- establishing standards and policies for operating the SMP volunteer program
- building the infrastructure necessary for supporting an effective volunteer management system.

As the SMP program is enhanced and as its public profile grows, these findings are of increasing concern. Risks to beneficiaries, volunteers themselves, local and state organizations and the overall SMP program are real, and immediate action is called for.

Program leaders from across the SMP network demonstrated at all three 2010 regional meetings strong support for VRPM project objectives, calling for quick action and immediate resources to help them respond appropriately to identified risks.

Volunteer Program Infrastructure

The set of systems, processes and structures that undergird volunteer involvement, including, for example:

- key values
- guiding principles
- systems (communication, accountability, reporting, risk management)
- policies
- procedures
- standards
- budgeting process
- staff resources
- planning and evaluation processes
- etc.

Where We Are Going From Here

The focus of the Volunteer Risk and Program Management Project is not to simply identify risks or problems; instead it is provide SMP programs with information and resources that will assist them in developing a safe and effective volunteer program.

Policies and procedures related to volunteer risk management will be released in "sets," staged over several years. Some of these policies will be program requirements for all SMP programs, some will be recommended and some will be illustrative of exemplary volunteer management practices.

1. The first set of policies and procedures related to the **control and mitigation of risks related to volunteer involvement in SMP programs** is being developed, as well as a set of policies on **screening** of volunteers and volunteer use of **information technology**.

These include items such as:

- Conducting a risk assessment
- Providing safe volunteer worksites
- Home visits by volunteers
- Reporting incidents and accidents
- Conflict of interest in prospective volunteers
- Conducting reference checks
- Criminal records checks
- Information protection protocols
- Internet usage protocols
- Reporting stolen or lost consumer information

Implementation of this first set of policies will begin in January, 2012; they will be fully implemented by SMPs by December 31, 2012.



SMP VOLUNTEER RISK AND PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

Where We Are Going From Here, continued

2. A set of policies and procedures related to **volunteer behavior and standards** and to **overall volunteer performance management** in SMP programs is being developed.

These will include items such as:

- Boundaries and ethics
- Confidentiality
- Relationships with beneficiaries
- Evaluating volunteer performance
- Taking corrective action
- Dismissal of volunteers

Implementation of this second set of policies will begin in January 2013; they will be fully implemented by SMPs by December 31, 2013.



SMP VOLUNTEER RISK AND PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

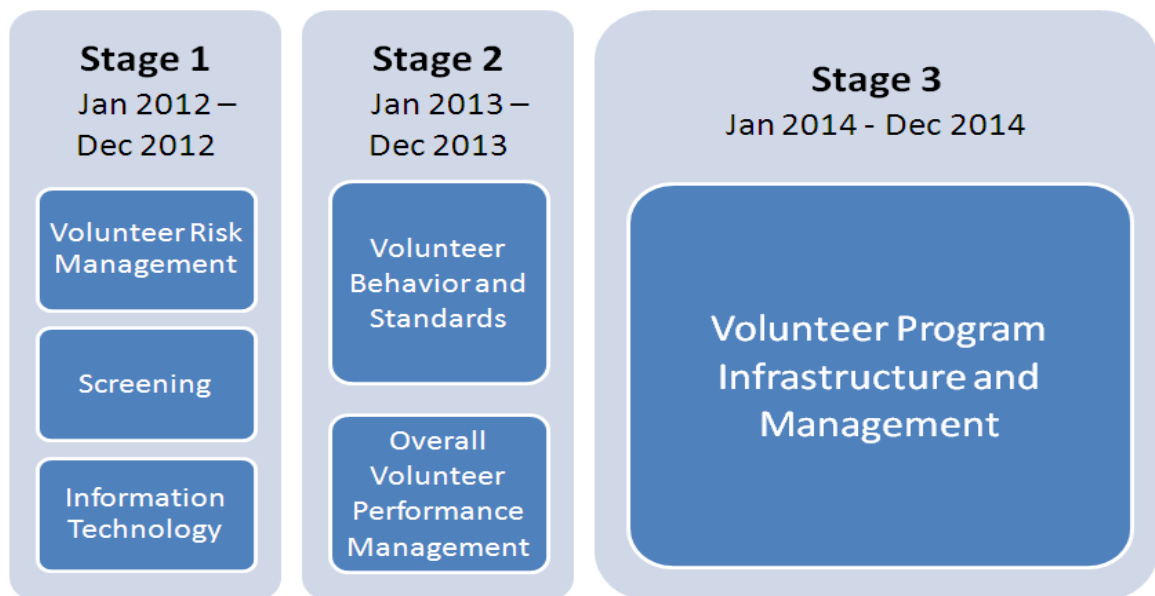
Where We Are Going From Here, continued

3. A set of policies related to broader aspects of **volunteer program infrastructure and management** is being developed.

These will include items such as:

- Development of volunteer roles
- Recruitment of volunteers
- Orientation and training
- Supervision of volunteers
- Retention and recognition

Implementation of this third set of policies will begin in January 2014; they will be fully implemented by SMPs by December 31, 2014.



What We Will Provide You

1. A series of detailed implementation guides will be developed to support the adoption of the sets of policies and procedures. These guides will provide in-depth coverage of topics such as developing a risk management system, volunteer screening, discipline and dismissal of volunteers, and so on, corresponding to each "set" of policies and procedures.

They will include detailed information such as:

- definitions, interpretations, and standards
 - suggested rollout strategies
 - expected implications for SMP partner agencies and strategies on how to work with partners on the implementation of policies
 - gaining management approval for policies where necessary
 - information about costs related to the implementation of policies and procedures, including both hard costs and human resource requirements
2. Additional sample policies and procedures, forms, worksheets, handbooks and tools will be gathered both from within the SMP community and from other organizations; as well, a set of model forms and procedures will be developed by the VRPM project specifically for SMP programs.
 3. A series of training webinars will be delivered to correspond with the release of each set of policies and procedures. Webinars will profile the policies and procedures and review each respective implementation guide to support policy and procedure adoption. Additional webinars and technical assistance related to volunteer program management will be provided on an ongoing basis by the SMP Resource Center.
 4. A volunteer program management manual will be prepared for the SMP program, covering best practices in working with volunteers and tips on working with volunteers in our changing volunteer environment.
 5. A volunteer handbook in template form will be produced by the SMP Resource Center to help SMPs introduce volunteer-related policies and procedures to their volunteer workforce. This handbook will be customizable by individual SMP programs.

Many of these resources will also be valuable to your partners who serve as host organizations for your SMP volunteers.

What We've Thought About In Taking This Direction

We realize that the approach we are taking will require substantial effort, especially for some SMP programs. Accordingly, we have adopted the following approach:

Timing

All requirements will have a staged rollout, giving you both advance notice and time to plan and prepare. No new policies will be released until January 2012 and each set has a twelve-month time period before it must be fully operational. You'll see a complete timeline starting on page 17.

Support

We will impose no requirement for which we do not also provide supportive resources including webinars, templates, worksheets, samples, and implementation guidance. This material will be available before the release date for each set of policies.

Workload

We have carefully considered priorities and are delaying the release of less urgent policies and procedures to give SMP programs time to adjust and make needed infrastructure changes before having to implement new practices.

Costs

We realize that some of these new practices will have an impact both on budget and staffing. Some programs will be more affected than others. We particularly recognize that having SMP staff who focus on managing the volunteer program is a critical priority and that dealing with the backlog of getting current volunteers into compliance with new practices will take a larger initial effort.

Partner relations

We know that most SMPs have a wide range of vital relationships with multiple partner organizations many of whom serve as host organizations for SMP volunteers. Some policies and procedures will apply to partner agencies that engage volunteers directly in SMP work. We will work with you to ensure that you can continue these rich and essential relationships while at the same time enhancing your control and oversight of the SMP volunteer work force. The implementation guides will identify where partner relationships may be affected and where you may experience resistance. They will include tips and processes to work with volunteer host organizations to implement new protocols.

Flexibility

Where flexibility in adoption is possible, each SMP program will decide how best to adapt and implement the new standards to fit their own program requirements and mode of operation.

The Value-Added of the VRPM Project

We know that – like all important changes – this initiative will be demanding. We believe it is a worthwhile one for the following reasons:

1. It will help SMP develop a more effective program model. The recommendations we are making are based on the well-tested best practices of many other volunteer programs across America and beyond. There is no doubt their adoption will enable SMPs to more safely, effectively and productively manage their volunteer effort.
2. It will ensure that SMP services are safer for beneficiaries and volunteers, and reduce volunteer-related liability exposure for SMP programs and their partners. This approach is consistent with the overall constant quality improvement approach being taken by AoA with all its programs.
3. More effective engagement of volunteers will allow SMPs to reach more people and provide better information. This initiative will produce the potential for a wider and safer set of services to SMP program beneficiaries, allowing us to both grow and improve provision of valuable assistance. We will have a greater assurance that what we offer, both directly and through our partner organizations, is of consistently high quality, and is as safe as possible for everyone concerned.
4. It will allow SMP programs to customize this initiative to local conditions while still building a safer, reliable and more unified and branded national profile. With increased publicity, all SMP programs are, in a sense, reliant on the effective operation of other SMP programs - one highly-publicized failure in management would damage the reputation of all programs.
5. It will create a uniform set of standards throughout the SMP network, in effect, establishing and communicating the SMP standard of care in relation to volunteer-based services. In this regard, there is safety in numbers. Creating a set of national standards will not only enhance program outcomes, but also clarify where the bar is set, thereby limiting liability for those programs that are in compliance with national standards. That, in turn, protects the reputation and public profile of the entire network.

An Example of What We're Talking About

There are many examples we might cite to illustrate the wide diversity in SMP operations, the inefficiencies and ineffectiveness of some models, and the risks and liabilities spawned by the absence of uniformity and minimum standards. Following is but one example we have tackled in this project.

Currently many SMPs treat “volunteer” as a singular category and accordingly require all volunteers to go through identical screening, training and supervision. In some cases a volunteer who simply distributes brochures is required to go through days of training on the intricacies of Medicare. While perhaps intellectually valuable, this practice creates obvious problems in volunteer recruitment and retention, and wastes limited management resources.

We recommend changing the overall approach to one that **tailors volunteer management practices to the type of work being done by the volunteer.**

Our recommended policy creates a range of **standard** volunteer roles at each SMP. The roles outlined below are arranged in ascending order of responsibility and complexity, and by extension, associated risk and liability.

Policy Statement - Volunteer Role Design

Volunteers may fill a range of standard roles at the SMP. Standard roles include, but may not be limited to the following:

1. SMP Information Distribution

Volunteers transport and disseminate SMP (hard copy) information to sites and at events; volunteers read or present prepared copy or perform scripted activities for outreach.

2. Administration

Volunteers assist the SMP through administrative work but do not interact with the public or answer questions about specific issues or situations. Any requests for information that might be received by administrative volunteers are referred to SMP Counselors or other qualified personnel. This volunteer role includes office assistance, data entry, outreach and other administrative work connected to the operation of the SMP.

An Example of What We're Talking About, continued

3. Simple Presentations

Volunteers give presentations about SMP related topics but the presentations are limited in timeframe, scope and degree of interaction with the audience. Content is of a general nature only. Simple presentations might be formal or via staffing of an information kiosk at an event. The distinguishing factor of this role is that volunteers do not engage in individual discussions regarding personal information or situations but are limited to provision of general information regarding the SMP, and fraud and abuse in Medicare and Medicaid. No counseling is provided. Specific questions are referred to an SMP Counselor who is appropriately trained to respond to individual inquiries.

4. In-depth Presentations

Volunteers give substantive presentations regarding SMP topics to audiences. These presentations offer opportunity for interaction with audience members. In-depth presentations are typically longer, and include delivery of more complex information and opportunity for Q & A with audience. These volunteers still are limited to provision of general information regarding SMP, Medicare and Medicaid fraud and abuse and do not engage in discussions of personal information or situations. Requests for counseling are referred to qualified SMP Counselors either on-site (when available) or at the SMP counseling service.

5. Counseling

SMP Counselor volunteers engage in direct discussion of the individual situations of beneficiaries but do not collect information from consumers regarding personal information such as finances, Medicare Numbers, Social Security Numbers (SSNs), or medical conditions. Inquiries that would involve receipt of such personal information are referred to SMP volunteers or staff qualified to field complex issues inquiries. Counseling discussions may occur either in-person or via telephone and may occur in locations other than SMP offices.

An Example of What We're Talking About, continued

6. Complex Issues and Referrals

Complex issues and referrals volunteers engage in in-depth interactions with individual beneficiaries. This SMP volunteer role requires higher standards of screening, training and experience. Factors that may require these higher standards include:

- *exposure to confidential information of consumers – finances, Medicare numbers, SSNs, medical information*
- *possibility of fraud investigation*
- *discussion of more complex Medicare topics or issues*
- *referrals of complex issues for further action*

Other volunteer roles may be created from time to time and as needed in the SMP. Volunteer roles add value to SMP services. When SMP staff are expected to work alongside or supervise SMP volunteers in a newly proposed role, the input of those staff is solicited in the development of the role. SMP staff are encouraged to identify possible new roles for SMP volunteers and the Coordinator of Volunteers assists staff in the development of volunteer assignments and role descriptions.

Creativity in role development is encouraged to engage a wide array of volunteer skills and make volunteer participation accessible to a diverse population of prospective volunteers.

This policy is not intended to restrict the development of volunteer roles but, instead, to classify SMP roles according to their level of complexity and degree of risk. For example, the need for specific cultural sensitivity or specialized language capacity demands customized recruitment and training. Risk increases with the complexity of the work or sensitivity of information being handled by the volunteer (as with a volunteer doing home visits or handling complex issues). It also increases when a volunteer works off site, or has access to the personal / financial information or property of the beneficiary, creating what we refer to as a “position of trust”.

What a Policy Can Accomplish

The advantage of establishing standardized volunteer roles is that we can then tailor volunteer program management practices to the different levels of volunteer involvement, following three principles:

- Volunteer roles at the lower end of the spectrum will receive limited screening and less intensive training before beginning work, and will receive less direct management/supervisory attention as they perform their work. All volunteers, however, will receive some minimal level of screening, training and ongoing support.
- Volunteer roles at the higher end of the spectrum will receive more intensive screening and training and closer oversight as they perform their work.
- As volunteers move up the ladder of responsibility and assume more intensive volunteer roles they must undergo the same screening and training as other volunteers who are in those roles.

The VRPM project will develop a matrix that identifies what types of minimum screening, training and supervision standards are required for each type of volunteer role, making it easy for SMP program staff to ensure that program rules are followed. The standards will be clear and each SMP will be able to know precisely how its own policies and procedures match up to the minimum national program requirements.

This approach reduces the unnecessary screening and training burden that is being placed on SMP volunteers who perform routine tasks while allowing SMP staff to focus their limited time on working more closely with volunteers in the riskier roles.

The approach will also allow both you and the SMP program nationally to have a better sense of what volunteers are doing and what SMPs and their partner organizations need to do to manage this involvement in a safe, effective and efficient manner.

You may be relieved to know that the policy quoted above is the longest and among the most complex of the policies expected to be generated by the VRPM project.

We Know That This Is Scary

The Steering Committee has given much deliberation as to how to proceed. Our decisions have been based on a growing realization that a good number of SMPs are unaware of the true complexities of operating what, by today's standards, would qualify as a safe and effective volunteer-based service. The feedback we received loudly and clearly from participants at all three regional conferences in 2010 indicated that many SMPs were surprised, if not terrified, by the risks and responsibilities involved in volunteer engagement, and particularly those connected to positions of trust. SMPs have come to understand that when any one program fails to perform effectively it can hurt all of us. One consequence of the increasing popularity and publicity accorded to the SMP program is that it will definitely face increased scrutiny and expectations of higher accountability.

Because of this, some program changes will be required. The subset of specific program requirements is being chosen very thoughtfully by the project Steering Committee. In almost every instance these requirements relate to areas of particular danger identified in our risk management assessment (especially in areas of volunteer background checks and screening, and in protection of beneficiary information accessed by volunteers) or because they are key areas related to effective volunteer management practices (such as creating performance standards for volunteer behavior to ensure that volunteers are actually doing the job we expect of them once they are trained and sent into the field).

We also realize there will be challenges for you in this process:

1. The notion of “requirements” is scary.

Keep in mind that even within the required standards, none must be fully operational until December 2012, and others will be phased in after that date. This determination is being made based not only on identified priorities but also on what we think the field can implement successfully given current program resources and what needs to be put in place immediately to support other related policies that will come later.

2. There is a possibility of a drop in volunteer numbers.

Currently SMPs record volunteer-related numbers to demonstrate their program effectiveness. Any change in the system for engaging volunteers holds the potential for a temporary drop in both the number of volunteers and volunteer hours. We are aware of this possibility. We also believe, however, that improving the system of volunteer involvement will, in the long run, result in increased accuracy of information to beneficiaries, improved ability to reach more beneficiaries and, ultimately, increased numbers of volunteers recruited and retained in a safer, well-managed volunteer system.

We Know That This Is Scary, continued

3. Conditions may change.

Part of what we are recommending depends on SMPs having assets, such as a designated Coordinator of Volunteers. As you know, AoA has been working to provide expanded funding and will continue that effort. If, however, this does not occur, or if other substantial changes at either the federal or state level would negatively impact the SMPs' ability to implement the program requirements, adjustments to our timeframe and expectations may be necessary.

4. This may affect current volunteers.

We know that issues will arise over “grandfathering” current volunteers into the system of new requirements, such as doing background checks of prospective volunteers. We fully expect this will demand both staff time and financial resources. We also know that having a majority of volunteers on the job for many years into the future who do not meet minimum standards places SMPs, individually and collectively, in an untenable position should volunteers cause great harm to themselves or others in our name.

We will continue to invite your input during this process, and we promise to listen and try to accommodate your needs. At the same time, we challenge you to create the best SMP program that you possibly can. Many of the new program requirements are things that should have been in place long ago, and we are proud to say that many SMP programs have already implemented them, and in some cases, have done so with more stringent requirements than we are proposing.

We recognize that you will need to begin planning for the cost of these efforts, which is why we are providing this general Vision Guide of the VRPM project so far in advance of when the first-level set of policies will become effective. It is both our hope and our recommendation that you get a head start on key minimum requirements compliance work now.

What Happens Next

Here is our timeline for implementation:

Setting the Stage

February -
August
2011

- The VRPM Project will begin to disseminate detailed information on the complete set of policies so that you will know exactly what the full range of foreseeable expectations will be. Informational webinars on topics related to the first released policies will begin in late Spring 2011.

August
2011

- A full review of the new requirements will take place at the National Conference along with “how-to” workshop sessions discussing some of the more complex requirements.

August -
December
2011

- We will begin releasing support materials, including guides, forms, templates, procedures, etc. Detailed implementation guides on the early policy releases will become available in a staged rollout in this period and beyond, each being accompanied by corresponding webinars.

What Happens Next, continued

Stage 1

January
2012

- The first-level set of policies becomes effective and SMP programs begin their implementation.

August
2012

- At regional conferences, we will seek your input into what is needed to continue to improve our implementation of the new policies and re-examine the timelines for implementation of subsequent policy rollouts.

August –
December
2012

- We will continue releasing support materials, including guides, forms, templates, procedures, etc. Detailed implementation guides on the early policy releases will become available in a staged rollout in this period and beyond, each being accompanied by corresponding webinars.

December
31, 2012

- SMP programs will have first-stage policies in place and operational.

What Happens Next, continued

Stage 2

January
2013

- The second-level set of policies becomes effective and SMP programs begin their implementation.

August
2013

- At the national conference, we will seek your input into what is needed to continue to improve our implementation of the new policies and re-examine the timelines for implementation of subsequent policy rollout.

August -
December
2013

- We will continue releasing support materials, including guides, forms, templates, procedures, etc. Detailed implementation guides on the early policy releases will become available in a staged rollout in this period and beyond, each being accompanied by corresponding webinars.

December
31, 2013

- SMP programs will have second-stage policies in place and operational.

What Happens Next, continued

Stage 3

January
2014

- The third-level set of policies becomes effective and SMP programs begin their implementation.

August
2014

- At the regional conferences, we will seek your input into what is needed to continue to improve our implementation of the new policies and re-examine the timelines for implementation of subsequent policy rollout.

August -
December
2014

- We will continue releasing support materials, including guides, forms, templates, procedures, etc.

December
31, 2014

- SMP programs will have third-stage policies in place and operational.

We recognize that many programs are already (or will move) in advance of this timeline. We will strive to quickly provide you resource materials so that your implementation process can move at a faster pace than minimum requirements call for.

What You Should Start Doing

Nothing good comes without effort, and the Volunteer Risk and Program Management Project is no exception.

We anticipate that you may face decisions and challenges in:

- budgeting changes, with some increased costs
- staff time commitments and position requirements
- board or senior management approval and support
- partner involvement
- development of program infrastructure

You may want to begin thinking about who on your staff would be a good point person for this effort, and bring him or her to the 2011 National Conference where this effort will be highlighted.

We have faith in the capacity of SMP staff to do the planning that will ultimately lead to a better and more effective SMP program structure. The sooner you start this planning process the easier it will be for you to build a safer and more effective SMP program. This is why we are providing you with this advance vision of what we will be doing together.

As always, we will remain open about what we are doing and receptive to your input as to how we might best implement these needed changes.

We are confident that this effort will enable SMPs to continue to lead the nation in empowering seniors to prevent health care fraud through outreach and education.

To view the webinar that discussed this Vision Guide, [click here](#), or visit www.smpresource.org > Resources for SMPs > Training > VRPM Training.

You can email questions or suggestions about the Volunteer Risk and Program Management Project to vrpm@smpresource.org.