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**LT. GOVERNOR ANTHONY BROWN ANNOUNCES LAUNCH OF HEALTH INSURANCE CONSUMER ASSISTANCE PROGRAM TO READY RESIDENTS AND SMALL EMPLOYERS FOR OPEN ENROLLMENT THROUGH [MARYLAND HEALTH CONNECTION](#)**

*Over 300 jobs to be created as Maryland Health Benefit Exchange selects six regional organizations to educate and enroll the newly eligible through the Affordable Care Act*

BALTIMORE (April 25, 2013)—Today Lt. Governor Anthony Brown joined the [Maryland Health Benefit Exchange](#) (MHBE) to announce the launch of its Connector Program with the award of an anticipated \$24 million in grant funds to six organizations serving as consumer assistance and enrollment resources throughout the state.

*“I’m proud to announce this important investment in Maryland’s health care system,” said Lt. Governor Anthony Brown. “By working together to implement the Affordable Care Act, we aren’t just helping Marylanders get the care they need, we’re also creating over 300 jobs across our state.”*

Because of this important investment by the state and federal government, *over 300 new jobs* will be created to implement this important program across Maryland. These jobs will be filled in organizations across six regions of the state: Central, Capital, Western, Upper Eastern Shore, Lower Eastern Shore and Southern region. These new health care navigators and assisters will work to meet the needs of individuals and small employers through outreach and education, eligibility determination and enrollment into Medicaid and qualified health plans. This regional approach ensures that the needs of Maryland’s uninsured and underserved communities are provided with in-person assistance as the new health insurance coverage options become available in October 2013.

The organizations selected and the counties they will serve are:

- **HealthCare Access Maryland (Central Region)**, serving Baltimore City and Baltimore and Anne Arundel counties
  - **107 new jobs**
- **Seedco, Inc. (Upper Eastern Shore Region)**, serving Harford, Cecil, Kent, Queen Anne's, Caroline, Talbot and Dorchester counties
  - **25 new jobs**
- **Worcester County Health Department (Lower Eastern Shore Region)**, serving Worcester, Wicomico and Somerset counties
  - **17 new jobs**
- **Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services (Capital Region)**, serving Montgomery and Prince George's counties
  - **80 new jobs**
- **Calvert Health Solutions (Southern Region)**, serving Calvert, Charles and St. Mary's Counties
  - **20 new jobs**
- **Healthy Howard (Western Region)**, serving Howard, Carroll, Frederick, Washington, Allegany and Garrett counties.
  - **57 new jobs**

In addition to the six connector entities, nearly 50 subcontractors will support the outreach, education and enrollment efforts of navigators and in-person assisters throughout the state. These organizations include health departments, hospitals, health clinics, community-based organizations, homeless shelters, workforce development centers and faith-based organizations. The intent of the regional approach is to ensure that all populations are reached including those with Limited English Proficiency, disabilities or those that may be in underserved communities.

***“Creating a customized outreach program for each region will allow the navigators to address the specific needs and resources of Marylanders throughout the state,” said Dr. Joshua M. Sharfstein, Secretary of the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene and chair of the Board of the Maryland Health Benefit Exchange***

Each organization will be responsible for helping consumers learn about, apply for and enroll in an appropriate health insurance product, including Medicaid, the Maryland Children's Health Program, and subsidized and non-subsidized qualified health plans.

The connector entities will employ trained and certified navigators to counsel and enroll residents into qualified health plans and Medicaid through Maryland Health Connection, the state-based insurance marketplace scheduled to open on October 1, 2013, as well as non-certified personnel, known as “assisters,” who will be trained to provide information, assistance and enrollment into Medicaid. Navigators and assisters will provide information about eligibility requirements for federal premium subsidies and cost-sharing assistance, and assess eligibility requirements for Medicaid and Maryland Children's Health Program.

*“The Connector Program is the result of a collaborative process over the past year involving stakeholders from across the state that strongly believe in the important role of outreach and enrollment,” said Rebecca Pearce, executive director, Maryland Health Benefit Exchange. “The regional approach will ensure that the local resources and infrastructure within the communities being served will be utilized to reach the uninsured and expand access to health care for many residents who have not had coverage in the past.”*

Navigators and in-person assisters will provide referrals to appropriate agencies, including the Attorney General’s Health Education and Advocacy Unit (HEAU) and the Maryland Insurance Administration (MIA) for applicants and enrollees with grievances, complaints, questions or the need for other social services through the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene and the Department of Human Resources (Social Services).

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**About Maryland Health Connection:** Maryland Health Connection is the marketplace for individuals, families and small businesses to compare and enroll in health insurance, as well as determine eligibility for Medicaid and other assistance programs, federal tax credits and cost-sharing reductions. Enrollment through Maryland Health Connection is scheduled to begin in October 2013, with insurance coverage beginning January 1, 2014. An estimated 180,000 individuals are expected to enroll in qualified health plans (QHPs) during the first year. [www.MarylandHealthConnection.gov](http://www.MarylandHealthConnection.gov)

**About Maryland Health Benefit Exchange:** The Maryland Health Benefit Exchange (MHBE) is a public corporation and independent unit of the State government established in April 2011 in accordance with the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010 (ACA). The (MHBE) has a nine member Board of Trustees that includes the Secretary of Health and Mental Hygiene, Maryland Insurance Commissioner and Executive Director of the Maryland Health Care Commission. The MHBE is responsible for the administration of the Maryland Health Connection. [www.MarylandHBE.com](http://www.MarylandHBE.com).