



Maryland Health Benefit Exchange

MEDIA CONTACT:
MHBE Press Office
(410) 547-6891
media@marylandhbe.com

MARYLAND LAUNCHES HEALTH INSURANCE CONSUMER ASSISTANCE PROGRAM TO READY RESIDENTS AND SMALL EMPLOYERS FOR OPEN ENROLLMENT THROUGH [MARYLAND HEALTH CONNECTION](#)

Maryland Health Benefit Exchange selects Worcester County Health Department to educate and enroll uninsured residents and small employers on the Lower Eastern Shore

BALTIMORE (April 25, 2013)—The [Maryland Health Benefit Exchange](#) (MHBE), the public corporation and unit of Maryland State government responsible for the implementation of the state-based insurance exchange through the Affordable Care Act, announced today 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. The Worcester County Health Department, located in Snow Hill, will serve as the prime grantee for a period of 12 months beginning July 1st to meet the needs of individuals and small employers in Wicomico, Somerset and Worcester Counties through outreach and education, eligibility determination and enrollment into Medicaid and qualified health plans. The 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 through Maryland Health Connection, the state-based health insurance marketplace.

The Worcester County Health Department will receive an anticipated \$1.2 million in grant funding to provide education, outreach, eligibility and enrollment services for the nearly 23,100 uninsured residents in the counties it serves. 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.

“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.”

“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

“We are honored to be selected as the connector entity for the Lower Eastern Shore,” said Worcester County Health Officer Deborah Goeller. “We look forward to working with our state and local partners to help people select health plans offered through Maryland Health Connection.”

The Worcester County Health Department will employ a workforce of 17 navigators and assisters to provide outreach and education, with a particular focus on hard-to-reach populations. Trained and certified navigators will 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. Non-certified personnel, known as “assisters,” 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 Worcester County Health Department is a strong and trusted partner in the communities it serves and will be a great connector entity to help educate and enroll the residents on the Eastern Shore,” said Rebecca Pearce, Executive Director of the Maryland Health Benefit Exchange.

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

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.