



# Marketing & Communications Guide for Consumer Assistance Organizations

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## Introduction

As Maryland Health Connection (MHC) enters its fourth season of open enrollment, the Maryland Health Benefit Exchange (MHBE) continues to assess and improve consumer satisfaction with the marketplace. Toward that end, MHBE collects information on consumer experience through surveys, focus groups, website user testing, as well as feedback from consumer assisters in the field.

We've learned that brand awareness of MHC is growing among the uninsured as the place to go for health coverage. We also know that some confusion remains and we need to do what we can to simplify the message, information and process as much as possible.

In order to continue to build brand recognition and clarify information for consumers, this manual outlines branding guidelines for all regional consumer assistance organizations, otherwise known as connector entities (CEs). In short, the brand guidelines ask all CEs to use the MHC brand as its primary identity when promoting its services to help consumers enroll through the marketplace. Presenting a unified identity throughout the state in all marketing efforts will help consumers better recognize and associate the MHC name and logo as Maryland's official health insurance marketplace.

The CEs and other MHBE partners have demonstrated great energy, creativity and credibility in promoting enrollment in the past, and we want that to continue. Your work is critical to the success of the marketplace. We look forward to even more success in enrolling the approximately 300,000 remaining uninsured Marylanders in need of health coverage in the years ahead.



## Purpose

This guide will provide direction to create cohesive marketing and communications resources supported by both MHBE and CEs. It also will:

- Promote increased communication between MHBE staff and CE personnel regarding ongoing marketing communications efforts and outreach, partnerships and activities.
- Provide a clear outline of the MHC branding policies and usage requirements for all aspects of marketing communications and outreach activities.
- Outline procedures for handling media requests.
- Share guidance on engaging with MHC in digital communications, specifically through social media.

## MHBE + Consumer Assistance Organization Communications

### Creating a Feedback Loop

As we zero in on the remaining uninsured, it will be ever more important to coordinate and communicate about outreach and enrollment efforts taking place across the state so that we can support each other where possible as well as avoid duplicating efforts. To that end, we hope to set up a clearer process for communication between MHBE and CEs. The following are a few steps we will take in that direction:

### E-newsletter

MHBE will distribute an e-newsletter every other week to appropriate CE staff to provide updates on upcoming and planned communications and outreach activities, including those involving CE partner organizations, as well as any available data updates and resources available through the Fact Sheet Library.

### CE Follow-up

In the same vein of the newsletter, we want to hear from CEs about their planning, resources and partnerships as well as vet any questions, concerns or requests for support. Please share this kind of feedback and follow up with Betsy Charlow at [elizabeth.charlow@maryland.gov](mailto:elizabeth.charlow@maryland.gov) and copy Ginny Seyler at [ginny.seyler@maryland.gov](mailto:ginny.seyler@maryland.gov).



### **CE Partners and Planning**

The relationships that CEs have established with their individual partner organizations are important. In order for MHBE to best support the efforts of CEs, MHBE must have a clear understanding of the nature and terms of these partnerships and their roles in assisting the CEs' work. This will inform the broader MHBE communications plan to ensure that there is no redundancy or duplication of efforts and that existing relationships are respected. CEs also are encouraged to share any planned activities, whether independent or with partner organizations, so that MHBE can assess how best to support CE efforts and/or replicate them in other regions or statewide.

### **Collecting and Sharing Stories**

We know that personal testimonials are an impactful way to motivate consumers to check out their coverage options and enroll through MHC. CEs and their navigators are perfectly positioned to collect these testimonials as they move consumers through the enrollment process. In addition to communicating feedback, planning and partnerships, please share consumer stories if they have agreed to do so.



## Maryland Health Connection Branding Guidelines

### Maryland Health Connection Logo

CEs under contract with MHBE for purposes of promotion and enrollment in MHC may use this logo:



### Logo Use

MHBE is requiring CEs to utilize the MHC brand as its primary identity in promoting its services to help consumers enroll through the marketplace. The CE's own brand should be secondary, as in "Powered by .....", "Brought to you by ..." or something similar.

In all cases where the MHC logo is used, usage should conform to the logo standards described below. The logo should be featured prominently on CE collateral materials, websites, presentations, and in physical enrollment settings through signage provided by MHBE.

### Logo Standards

The MHC logo is available in appropriate file formats for printing, presentations and online applications. Approved electronic files will be provided by the MHBE marketing department upon request.

Always use the vector (EPS) files for high-quality printing. Use JPEG or PNG versions for on-screen applications and PowerPoint presentations. A reverse version (white knockout) is available as an EPS or PNG file for use on solid backgrounds or photos.

Ensure that there is adequate contrast with the background color when using the reverse logo. Never use the logo on backgrounds that compete with or distract from the logo. Never distort, modify or attempt to recreate the logo.

### Minimum Clear Space Requirement

To prevent outside elements from intruding on the logo, adequate clear space should always be allowed. An area equal to the height of the icon ("x") should be allowed on all four sides of the logo as measured from the outer corners of the icon. When the logo is used in



smaller spaces (as on a business card), one-half the height of the icon (1/2 “x”) is acceptable.

### **Minimum Size Requirement**

To ensure legibility of the logo, it should not appear in sizes smaller than 1.25” in width.

### **Use of Maryland Health Connection Assets**

Images in advertising and collateral produced by MHBE are restricted for use solely in promoting MHC. Transferring ownership of images to outside organizations may violate image licensing agreements and is not permitted.

### **Approval of Marketing Materials**

CEs must submit all collateral for approval by MHC before printing or distributing. Please send to Betsy Charlow at [elizabeth.charlow@maryland.gov](mailto:elizabeth.charlow@maryland.gov) and allow 48 hours for review.

CEs should review marketing materials created by their subcontractors to ensure compliance with marketing and outreach guidelines.

### **Co-branding Guidelines for CE-developed Marketing Materials**

CEs may wish to develop their own materials for promoting MHC. These materials must adhere to the branding standards described here.

- Co-branded materials should emphasize MHC, with the CE logo as a secondary brand. Appropriate emphasis includes:
- Situating the MHC logo centrally on the collateral
- Using MHC brand blue and green
- Featuring [MarylandHealthConnection.gov](http://MarylandHealthConnection.gov) as the online place to enroll
- Only CEs may co-brand with MHC; subcontractors may not create co-branded materials.
- Materials must be printed in color.
- CEs that opt to create and print additional co-branded materials do so at their own expense.
- All collateral created independently by CEs should be shared with the MHBE marketing and outreach team in advance of printing and distribution. This review will ensure that all MHC materials present a cohesive identity for the marketplace.
- All collateral is legally required to include the following disclaimer. You may omit the Spanish or Chinese line if the material is in that respective language.



#### Required Disclaimer on Print Materials:

Maryland Health Benefit Exchange complies with applicable Federal civil rights laws and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, or sex.

Hay ayuda disponible en su idioma: 1-855-642-8572 (TTY: 1-855-642-8573). Estos servicios están disponibles gratis.

用您的语言为您提供帮助：1-855-642-8572（TTY: 1-855-642-8573）。这些服务都是免费的。

### Messaging & Usage

CEs should refer to the Communicators Guide for guidance in developing clear and consistent communications about MHC. The Guide provides further detail about:

- MHC general style and usage
- Language and word use
- Clear writing and plain language
- Health insurance terms and definitions
- Sample messages
- Frequently asked questions and answers
- MHC brand

### Maryland Health Connection Marketing Materials

The MHBE will provide initial print quantities of marketing and outreach collateral items for MHC for use by CEs. These may include the following:

- Rack cards
- Posters
- Brochures
- Novelty Items (i.e. hand sanitizer and tote bags)
- Event signage
- Tablecloths

Select printed materials will be provided in English and Spanish. CEs with specific language needs based on population statistics are required to provide in-language outreach and education materials. CEs are responsible for distributing marketing materials to their



partners. CEs may continue to use materials already printed from previous years provided they do not have outdated information, such as enrollment deadlines, contact information, income limits, etc., on them.

### **Printing Fact Sheets or Flyers**

CEs who want additional quantities of flyers have the option to print them at their own expense. The flyers can be reproduced using desktop laser printing or professional quick printing.

How to proceed with desktop or quick printing of flyers:

- High-resolution PDFs can be found at [MarylandHealthConnection.gov/downloads](http://MarylandHealthConnection.gov/downloads). The flyers must be printed in color.
- If desktop printing: For best results, print in color to letter-sized (8 ½ x 11) paper at 300 dpi. If you are using Windows Photo Viewer, you may need to uncheck the “Fit picture to frame” option in the print dialog box to avoid cutting off part of the image area. Please note the flyers must be printed in color.
- If quick printing: Take the high resolution PDFs to a quick printer, such as Staples, Office Depot or an independent print shop. Specify that you want color copies, at 300 dpi, on letter-sized paper (8 ½ x 11).

### **In-Language Materials**

CEs are required to provide marketing materials that meet the language needs of residents in their region, as described in the Solicitation. MHC provides Spanish versions of most advertising and collateral materials.

When producing ads or collateral in other languages, CEs should take care to have materials transcreated, not simply translated. Transcreation refers to the process of adapting a message from one language to another in a way that goes beyond finding word-to-word equivalents to ensure that messages work cross-culturally.

### **Media Relations**

The MHBE strives for proactive outreach, transparency and responsiveness to media inquiries. To that end, requests for information and comment require prompt attention and a coordinated effort to ensure questions about the MHBE and MHC are properly addressed.



## MHBE Press Office Contacts:

Andrew Ratner

- Director of Marketing and Strategic Initiatives
- [aratner@maryland.gov](mailto:aratner@maryland.gov)
- O: 410-547-6325
- M: 443-827-6558

Betsy Charlow

- Deputy Director, Marketing and Outreach
- [elizabeth.charlow@maryland.gov](mailto:elizabeth.charlow@maryland.gov)
- O: 410-547-6324
- M: 443-257-3293

Press Office General Contact

- [media@marylandhbe.com](mailto:media@marylandhbe.com)
- 410-547-6891

Please forward all media requests to the MHBE as soon as possible (via phone or e-mail) that pertain to the following:

Maryland Health Benefit Exchange

- Board of Trustees
- Management team
- Procurement
- Legislation, policies, regulations

Maryland Health Connection

- Rates and plans
- Call Center
- Data/statistics
- Advertising/outreach (MHC)
- Contractor and subcontractors
- Performance of the system/site



- Data
- Confidentiality/privacy
- Appeals/grievances

Please call the MHBE Press Office if you would like input when you are working with the media on stories. MHBE communications staff will work with you to:

- Identify an appropriate spokesperson and/or subject matter experts for media opportunities.
- Fact check background information for stories as needed.
- Supply visuals and background materials as needed to support media outreach.
- Partner with CEs on story opportunities to identify agency partners and angles.

### Press Release Process and Requirements

- All press releases should include the MHC logo, the CE logo (if you have one), and MHC boilerplate statement at the end. The statement is:

About Maryland Health Connection: Maryland Health Connection is the state-based marketplace for Marylanders to shop and enroll in health insurance, as well as determine eligibility for Medicaid and other assistance programs, federal tax credits and cost-sharing reductions. [MarylandHealthConnection.gov](http://MarylandHealthConnection.gov)

- All press releases must be approved in advance by Andrew Ratner, director of marketing and strategic initiatives at [aratner@maryland.gov](mailto:aratner@maryland.gov), or Betsy Charlow, deputy director, marketing and outreach, at [elizabeth.charlow@maryland.gov](mailto:elizabeth.charlow@maryland.gov).
- Please provide press releases for approval at least 24 hours in advance.

### Consumer Assistance Organization Partners

- CEs should require that all partners submit any announcements to the CE in advance for approval.
- It is the responsibility of each CE to ensure that partners are aware of the Media Relations protocol.

### Marketing and Outreach Events

MHBE has produced the **Consumer Assistance Event Playbook**, which should be used for planning and implementing MHC marketing and enrollment events.



Only certified navigators and assisters of CEs may represent MHC when participating in community events at partner sites or other locations. The following are general guidelines that will apply to partner events and most outreach and education events that CEs may conduct or participate in on behalf of MHC.

- Your organization's representatives should wear MHC T-shirts or your organization's white, green or blue shirts when staffing outreach and education events.
- Please promote events in your market to drive attendance and participation through calendar notices, print ads in your community papers or other vehicles you choose. In your promotions, specify the event locations and hours.
- You are responsible for providing marketing and promotional materials you need to effectively conduct and market each event.
- During the event, it is required to use the provided MHC tablecloth, table top signage, and collateral. Feel free to include anything else you deem necessary for a successful outreach and education event.
- If a table and chairs are not provided by the event organizer, you will need to provide them for your representative(s). Your representative(s) will be responsible for setting up the table and chairs at the event.
- When setting up a table at an event, please follow the event organizer's guidelines for the minimum amount of clear space at all exits.
- Please take photos to chronicle the event for MHC. Smartphones can be used to capture photos, but cameras are preferred as they provide higher quality images. Use the provided social media photo prop as appropriate. Please forward photos, along with a headcount of attendees, to Andrew Ratner at [aratner@maryland.gov](mailto:aratner@maryland.gov). If possible, do this during the events, so that MHBE can share them on social media.

## Events Calendar

CEs are responsible for ensuring their website calendars of events are comprehensive and updated, and providing the MHBE communications team with details at least one week in advance to add to the MHC calendar. This will allow time for MHBE to support events through social or earned media. They also should confirm that the information is updated on the Events Calendar at [MarylandHealthConnection.gov/enrollment-events](https://MarylandHealthConnection.gov/enrollment-events).

MHBE will plan and execute, in collaboration with the CEs, three statewide events throughout the open enrollment period: library enrollment day, community college enrollment day and faith-based enrollment events. All CE's are required to participate in these events.



Recommended format for calendar entries is:

**Enrollment event (Westminster)**

**When** Sat, January 9, 10am – 2pm

**Where** Town Mall of Westminster, 400 North Center St., Westminster, MD 21157 ([map](#))

**Description** Maryland Health Connection enrollment event hosted by our partner, Door to HealthCare Western Maryland. Find more locations and hours here: <http://bit.ly/1KKBczH>.

Be sure to bring these items to apply: <http://bit.ly/1yMtiBG>

## Digital Communications

The MHC logo linking to MarylandHealthConnection.gov should be featured prominently on the CE websites to lend credibility, promote the marketplace, and designate your organization as authorized to enroll Marylanders.

### Engaging with Maryland Health Connection’s Social Media Platforms

We encourage you to share photos and videos from MHC’s social media channels on your CE channels.

Our channels are Facebook ([MarylandConnect](#)), Twitter [@MarylandConnect](#) and Instagram [@GetCoveredMD](#).

The tips below can help guide your use of the social media channels for MHC. If you have questions, need trainings or refreshers, we’re happy to help.

DO	DON'T
Familiarize yourself with MHC social media channels—our consumer-facing communication forums.	Represent MHC or the MHBE on any social media channels that you personally maintain, i.e. your personal Facebook page, Twitter, etc.
Follow the conversations! This can help you better understand how consumers are interacting with MHC and how you can best support them.	Comment on MHC or the MHBE, its policies, practices or operations on any personal social media channels that you personally maintain, i.e. your personal Facebook or Twitter accounts.



Alert marketing staff if you see something that is a concern on a social media channel or a violation of the social media policy.	Respond to posts on MHC posts or tweets through personal accounts.
Adhere to the <a href="#">MHBE social media policy</a> , as well as the State of Maryland information technology policies.	Provide any private or confidential information about MHC through social media channels.
Install MHC social widgets in your email signature and encourage others to follow us on Facebook and Twitter.	

### General Recommendations for Social Media

- **Retweet/Share** to help broaden the reach of messages, including content like general information, website updates, news, events and updates, etc.
- **Comment** to add value and show solidarity in social conversations.
- **Tag @MarylandConnect** in original posts or retweets that contain information relevant to MHC. @ConnectorEntity handle in original posts or retweets that contain information relevant to the specific consumer assistance organization
- Use #Hashtags
- Hashtags (#Word) are keywords that aggregate tweets around a topic. Clicking on a hashtag allows you to follow the conversation and the tweets from other users who are also using that particular hashtag in their tweets. Include hashtags used by MHC and national partners (such as #GetCovered, #GetCoveredMD or #HealthYeah) in your social media posts to be part of the conversation around that hashtag and increase engagement with your posts.

### Facebook Best Practices

- **Post Photos:** Images catch the user's attention and are a simple way for them to digest information. Photos of happy people who have received assistance getting enrolled are often the most compelling images. Be certain to have release forms on site, available from MHBE if needed, to get permission to use identifiable images of consumers. Photos of community leaders or elected officials who visit events are also good to share on social, since their own channels often have sizable followings as well. Tag the community leader's Facebook page to ensure they see your content and increase the chance they retweet it.
- **Be Engaging:** Post in a way that encourages the audience to take action or provide a response, i.e.: "enroll now," "get started," questions, fill-in-the-blanks, etc.
- **Be Human:** Use a conversational tone that people can relate to. When responding to a comment use the person's name, be supportive and show empathy.



- **Be Timely:** Respond to relevant comments as quickly as possible.

### Twitter Helpful Tips

- Tweets can include links to helpful resources, videos, news articles, etc.
- The best way to include links within a tweet without taking up too many characters is to use a URL shortening service, such as [bit.ly](https://bit.ly), to take a long URL and condense the link to a shorter amount of characters.
- Twitter also has a photo share button, which allows you to easily select a photo to include along with your tweet.
- If a user is continually derogatory or offensive, block the user.

### Twitter Best Practices

- **Be Timely:** Twitter is known for its useful, real-time content. Successful tweets will be prompt and timely.
- **Be Short:** According to a recent report by Buddy Media, tweets shorter than 100 characters have a 17% higher engagement rate.
- **Be Engaging:** Engage and create conversation with others by using @replies and mentions.