

MEDIA RELEASE

JAN. 29, 2016

MARYLANDERS CAN FINISH ENROLLING BY FRIDAY, FEB. 5 DUE TO BLIZZARD INTERRUPTION

BALTIMORE (Jan. 29, 2016) — Marylanders who began enrolling for 2016 health plans through Maryland Health Connection will be granted several more days to complete enrollment after the deadline of Jan. 31, due to the effects of the recent blizzard, Maryland Health Benefit Exchange announced today.

Consumers who self-attest that the snowstorm and its aftermath affected their ability to call the call center, visit a local “connector” office or finish applying by the original Jan. 31 deadline will be able to complete the process until 11:59 p.m. Friday, Feb. 5.

“We’re pleased that our consumer assistance partners have agreed to serve consumers impacted by the storm,” said Carolyn Quattrocki, executive director of the Maryland Health Benefit Exchange. “We’re also pleased that more than 460,000 Marylanders have enrolled in private plans for 2016 coverage or in Medicaid through the state marketplace since Nov. 1. We’re seeing more customers served, greater interest and greater competition in the marketplace than ever.”

The Maryland Health Benefit Exchange maintained its Consumer Support Center call operation throughout the storm, switching operations to a facility out-of-state. But in-person assistance was impacted by office closures and travel difficulties for Marylanders this past week. Consumers can still get free, in-person assistance by contacting an authorized broker or an enrollment navigator — more than 1,500 trained experts across the state. For a list of hours, locations and contact information, visit MarylandHealthConnection.gov/get-help-enrolling

Also, the call center at 1-855-642-8572 (TTY: 1-855-642-8573) will have extended hours this weekend, from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Saturday and from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. on Sunday.

Several enrollment events have been rescheduled to this weekend due to the storm. Check MarylandHealthConnection.gov for details about “Super Health Sunday” events at several faith institutions. Free, in-person assistance also will be offered in Easton at the Talbot County Free Library, 100 W. Dover St., from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday and in Salisbury at the Wicomico Youth & Civic Center, 500 Glen Ave., from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Sunday.

Enrollment in a private health plan must be completed by Feb. 5 for health or dental coverage to begin March 1. After Feb. 5, a qualifying “life event” such as marriage, the birth or adoption of a child, or loss of other health coverage, would be required to be eligible to enroll. Marylanders who qualify for Medicaid can enroll through MarylandHealthConnection.gov year-round.

Coverage is better than a penalty: For 2016, the federal tax penalty for being uninsured is 2.5 percent of gross household income over the federal income tax filing threshold, or \$695 per individual — whichever is greater. The law provides certain exemptions, including for people below a certain income and those who are without coverage for fewer than three months.

###

[About the Maryland Health Benefit Exchange](#): The Maryland Health Benefit Exchange (MHBE) is a public corporation and independent unit of state government. It was established in 2011 in accordance with the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010 (ACA) and administers Maryland Health Connection. MarylandHBE.com

[About Maryland Health Connection](#): Maryland Health Connection (MHC) is the state-based health insurance marketplace for individuals and families 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. MarylandHealthConnection.gov

Media Contacts

Andrew Ratner, Director of Marketing
443-827-6558, aratner@maryland.gov

Betsy Charlow, Deputy Director of Marketing and Outreach
410-547-6324 W, 443-257-3293 C, elizabeth.charlow@maryland.gov