



MARYLAND  
HEALTHBENEFIT  
EXCHANGE

# Quarterly Update

Fall 2019

Maryland is viewed as a leader nationally in both health care delivery and in efforts to strengthen the individual market for health insurance. In 2019, Maryland increased funding for its reinsurance program, which has led to price stability and enrollment growth. Monthly premiums for 2020 will have fallen on average by about 22% since 2018. While the overall uninsured rate has been driven to a historic low of 6%<sup>1</sup> in the latest figures from the U.S. Census, the state continues to seek innovative ways to improve access to health coverage for the roughly **370,000** Marylanders who remain uninsured. On average, every half-minute a Marylander (1.2 million) enrolls or renews in coverage for themselves and their families through Maryland Health Connection—one of every six residents of Maryland.

# 10 Things to know about MarylandHealthConnection.gov

## 01

**Open Enrollment through MarylandHealthConnection.gov for 2020 begins on Nov. 1, 2019 at 5 a.m. and ends on Dec. 15, 2019 at midnight.** Like last year, the website and the “Enroll MHC” mobile app will be open 5 a.m. to 1 a.m. daily. People can begin shopping for a private health plan without creating an account beginning the week of Oct. 7. This open enrollment period does not pertain to those who qualify for Medicaid, who may apply any time of year.

## 02

**There are cheaper options for 2020. Monthly premiums for most plans are lower and some offer more access to health care services, like physician visits and generic drugs, before deductible.**

Due to the second year of the state reinsurance program, average rates for plans in the individual health insurance market for people who purchase coverage on their own are expected to average about **10%** less for 2020 than in 2019. Reinsurance also helped lower monthly premiums for households that buy insurance on the individual market off-exchange without financial help.

Monthly premiums (before tax credits for those eligible)	2018	2019	2020 <sup>2</sup>
CareFirst HMO	\$465.15	\$382.90	\$340.94
CareFirst PPO	\$685.99	\$626.26	\$626.82
Kaiser Permanente HMO	\$373.48	\$348.95	\$334.52

*Monthly rate for a 40-year-old non-smoker, Baltimore metro area on silver plan. Rates change by age, region, and metal level.*

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, “Health Insurance Coverage in the United States: 2018,” Sept. 10, 2018

<sup>2</sup> Maryland Insurance Administration

# 03

## What else is new for 2020?

- ✘ New value plans also have lower deductibles that are hundreds or even thousands of dollars cheaper than last year. Also, new bronze plans include up to three visits to primary care and mental health physicians before deductible and gold and silver plans offer unlimited physician visits and generic drugs before deductible.
- ✘ Special enrollment periods for pregnancies, after confirmation by a health care practitioner.
- ✘ Maryland will become the first state in the nation to alert households they may qualify for free or low-cost health insurance through information submitted on their state tax forms. The Maryland Easy Enrollment Health Insurance Program (MEEHP) is expected to identify thousands of residents who can then choose to enroll almost immediately.

# 04

**New public charge regulations by the federal Department of Homeland Security (DHS) may affect enrollment in immigrant communities.** The regulations allow federal immigration officers to consider the use of public benefits, including Medicaid, against an individual's application to become a legal permanent resident or green card holder. Those under age 21 and pregnant women are exempt. The rule applies to individuals seeking entry into the United States, an extension of their stay or change in status beginning on Oct. 15, 2019. For applications submitted before Oct. 15, the prior rules apply. Even though receipt of financial assistance through Maryland Health Connection in the form of advanced premium tax credits will not be considered in these public charge determinations, confusion about the change could affect applications.

# 05

**Stable and slightly lower rates will continue to support growth in the individual market.** The impact of the first year of reinsurance was significant. Average premiums for 2019 fell by **\$77** a month. That made Maryland the 17th least expensive market in the nation, down from 26th the prior year. In a survey last winter of prior Maryland Health Connection enrollees who didn't renew for 2019 coverage, "affordability" dropped by two-thirds as a reason not to renew, compared to a similar survey two years earlier.

For 2019, **156,963** people enrolled, which was 2.2% more than 2018. That increase was eighth-best in the nation. Maryland was one of roughly a quarter of the states that experienced growth in 2019. About **40,000** also have dental coverage through Maryland Health Connection. By maintaining its investment in consumer assistance and marketing and outreach, Maryland has continued as a leader in its share of young adults enrolled. It also gained enrollments among African-American, Hispanic and rural households. Latest data available at [marylandhbe.com/news-and-resources/reportsdata](http://marylandhbe.com/news-and-resources/reportsdata)

### CUSTOMER FEEDBACK

**"My husband and I were without health insurance for several years. We were paying \$450 out of pocket for monthly asthma meds...debt! Our local AHEC helped us see what we qualified for and sign up. It has been an incredible help and they made it so easy. Very grateful!"**

# 06

**Lower premiums have led many to be able to lower their out-of-pocket deductible costs by thousands as well.** Not only did marketplace enrollment grow by **3,392** individuals in 2019, families felt they could afford platinum and gold plans, which means they saved thousands on deductibles. The share of gold/platinum enrollments in Maryland was four times the average of states on HealthCare.gov.

# 07

**An estimated 289,727 Marylanders who are eligible to get coverage through Maryland Health Connection lack insurance, down from 736,740 uninsured prior to the Affordable Care Act.**

Based on estimates, more than half of those without insurance would qualify for free or partially subsidized coverage.

Total uninsured remaining eligible (adjusted)	Remaining children under 19, potentially eligible for subsidized private insurance (qualified health plans)	Remaining non-elderly adults, eligible for subsidized private plans	Remaining children and non-elderly adults, eligible for unsubsidized private plans
285,043	40,462	273,760	85,305

Uninsured remaining eligible for insurance (0-65) through Maryland Health Connection by county (adjusted) <sup>3</sup>					
Prince George's	65,431	Charles	4,218	Allegany	2,490
Montgomery	54,911	Calvert	2,999	Wicomico	5,308
Baltimore County	35,976	Caroline	2,025	Washington	7,301
Baltimore City	36,921	Dorchester	1,028	Cecil	1,561
Anne Arundel	20,216	Garrett	805	Worcester	724
Howard	10,139	Queen Anne's	944	Queen Anne's	3,139
Frederick	8,627	St. Mary's	4,463	Carroll	4,610
Harford	7,293	Somerset	1,061	Talbot	1,111

## CUSTOMER FEEDBACK

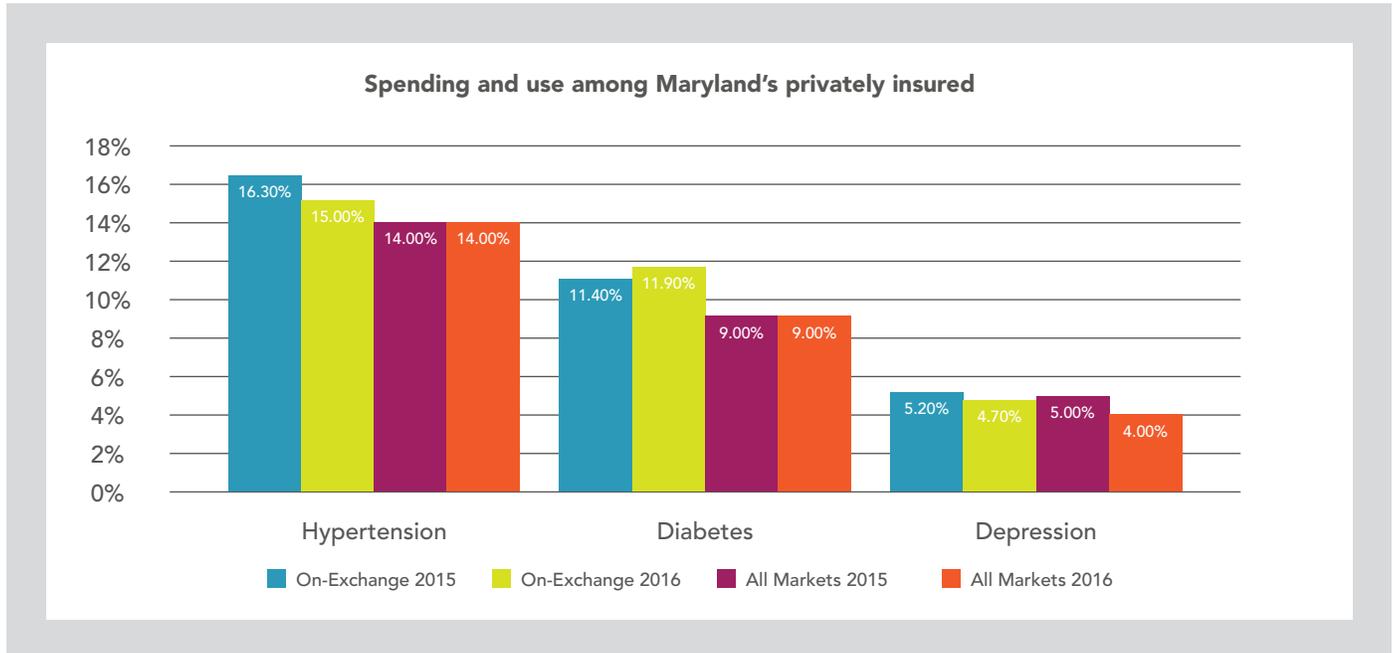
**"Saturday, December 15th I was trying to enroll at 10:42 p.m. at night. I was having issues and [the navigator] with The Maryland Health Connection texted me and worked with me right up until the deadline. It was close to midnight when she was still trying to enroll me. On top of that I was volunteering at a shelter so I wasn't able to talk on the phone and had to communicate through text messaging. I am forever grateful for her because I actually needed insurance this year because of some health issues. I can't imagine what I would be going through if she hadn't taken the time to help me especially so late at night."**

<sup>3</sup>Hilltop Institute / University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC), Health Care Reform Simulation Model, "Implementing Insurance Coverage Expansion," Oct. 26, 2012

<sup>4</sup>Maryland Health Benefit Exchange (MHBE) analysis of Census Data (ACS 2017 5-years estimates), MHBE Enrollment Data, U.S. Internal Revenue Service Individual Mandate Payment Data (2016), Rural Council of Maryland rural/urban designation, State Health Access Data Assistance Center (SHADAC) estimates of unlawfully present migrants and precision adjustment methodology

# 08

**Although a short period of time has passed to show changes in healthier outcomes since the Affordable Care Act, various studies have already indicated some early impact in Maryland.** In one example<sup>5</sup>, in 2015-2016, the individual health insurance market increased as a source of treatment for individuals with chronic diseases that can become debilitating due to lack of care, such as hypertension and diabetes, which especially afflict poor and minority communities.



## Other studies have also shown positive impacts of the ACA in Maryland:

- ✘ By expanding Medicaid eligibility, Maryland extended Medicaid cessation coverage to about 70,140 adult smokers who were not previously eligible for Medicaid.<sup>6</sup>
- ✘ Among young adult trauma patients in Maryland, a study found a 5.4 percentage-point increase (60% relative increase) in the use of rehabilitation due to expanded insurance coverage.<sup>7</sup>
- ✘ Number of uninsured children dropped 24% in Maryland from 2013-2016, from 59,000 to 45,000.<sup>8</sup>
- ✘ Medicaid-covered emergency room visits increased by 159,000, between 2012/13 and 2014/15, from 23.3% to 28.9%, while uninsured patient visits by 181,607, from 16.3% to 10.4%.<sup>9</sup>

### CUSTOMER FEEDBACK

**"Applying online is a very smooth and easy process! Also the representatives are very pleasant and helpful when I have questions."**

### CUSTOMER FEEDBACK

**"The specialist who I dealt with was THE BEST I've had so far. I do not think I'll get someone like that next time I call. I had to call because my case was a bit peculiar and needed a live person."**

<sup>5</sup> Maryland Health Care Commission

<sup>6</sup> Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR), CDC, "State Medicaid Expansion Tobacco Cessation Coverage and Number of Adult Smokers Enrolled in Expansion Coverage — United States, 2016," Dec. 9, 2016

<sup>7</sup> JAMA Surgery, "Implications of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act on Insurance Coverage and Rehabilitation Use Among Young Adult Trauma Patients," Dec. 21, 2016

<sup>8</sup> Georgetown University Health Policy Institute Center for Children and Families, "Nation's Uninsured Rate for Children Drops to Another Historic Low in 2016," September 2017

<sup>9</sup> Annals of Emergency Medicine, "The Effect of Medicaid Expansion on Utilization in Maryland Emergency Departments," June 21, 2017

# 09

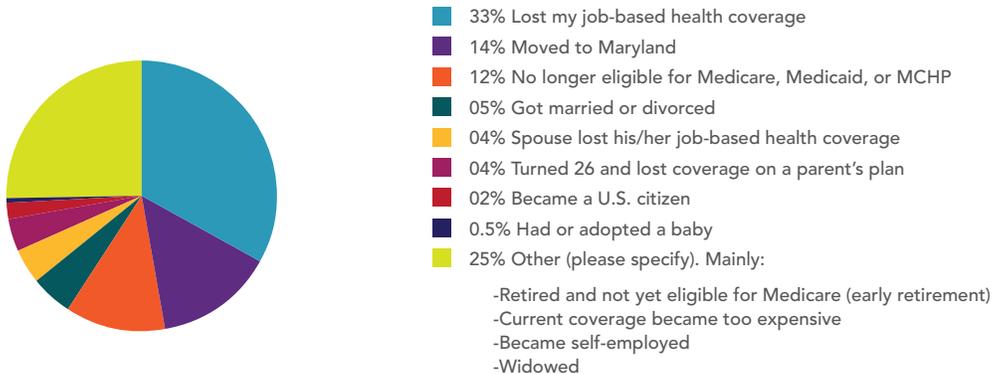
## The Maryland Health Benefit Exchange (MHBE) continues to make major strides in consumer technology.

With **500,000** downloads, its mobile app has been among the most successful of its type in the nation. In August 2019, MHBE successfully migrated its technology system onto a new cloud-based platform known as the Maryland Total Human-services Integrated Network (MD THINK). The process took more than a year, working with the Maryland Departments of Human Services, Information Technology and Health. Also that month, MHBE was honored among the top hundred technology operations in both the private and public sectors by tech media outlet IDG World at its CIO100 Awards.<sup>10</sup>

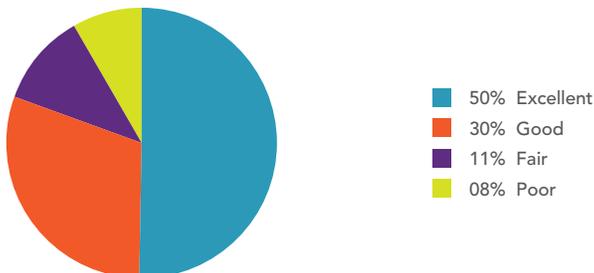
# 10

## Consumer satisfaction continues to improve. 80% of nearly 400 new enrollees who responded to an email survey in 2019<sup>11</sup> judged their experience to be good or excellent.

### Their reasons for enrolling:



### How they assessed their enrollment experience:



<sup>10</sup> IDG Press Release, "CIO Celebrates IT Innovation and Leadership with 2019 CIO 100 Award Winners & Hall of Fame Inductees," May 1, 2019

<sup>11</sup> MHBE survey of 393 Maryland Health Connection applicants, Feb. 26, 2019