

Media Release

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DEADLINE EXTENDED TO JULY 15 FOR UNINSURED MARYLANDERS TO ENROLL IN HEALTH COVERAGE WHEN THEY FILE STATE TAXES

PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN MARYLAND HEALTH BENEFIT EXCHANGE, COMPTROLLER OF MARYLAND CREATES AN EASY PATH TO SIGN UP FOR HEALTH COVERAGE

BALTIMORE, MD – The Maryland Easy Enrollment Health Insurance Program, a partnership between the Office of Maryland Comptroller Peter Franchot and Maryland Health Benefit Exchange, the agency that runs Maryland Health Connection, will allow uninsured Marylanders to enroll in health insurance through July 15. The extended date coincides with the new state income tax filing and payment deadline, which is now July 15, 2020 due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

This year, a new question on state tax forms (502 and 502B) asks tax filers if they want to share some information, like household size and income, with the Maryland Health Benefit Exchange to see if they are eligible for free or low-cost health insurance. Since the program began this year, more than 35,000 households have checked the box, and after receiving a notice from Maryland Health Benefit Exchange, have 35 days from the date on the mailed notice to enroll. So far, more than 1,600 have enrolled in health coverage. About 95% have qualified for free or low-cost coverage. And more than 40% of all enrollments have been by young adults ages 18-34, higher than the 30% range more typical for Maryland marketplace enrollments in recent years.

“Health coverage is on everyone’s minds right now. We are glad more than 1,600 people have utilized the Maryland Easy Enrollment Health Insurance Program to obtain health insurance coverage. In light of the current extension, we’re grateful to both the Comptroller and our carriers for keeping this enrollment period open so individuals and families can get the coverage they need,” said Michele Eberle, executive director of Maryland Health Benefit Exchange.

Free help enrolling is available by phone from trained navigators, brokers and the call center for those who file their taxes before July 15 and check the box on their tax form, at:

<https://www.marylandhealthconnection.gov/find-help/>

“This pandemic underscores the need to not only protect public health, but also ensure access to affordable health care. The success so far during this tax season demonstrates this check off is working,” said Comptroller Franchot. “The decision to extend both the state income tax filing deadline and the easy enrollment program offers additional and much needed support to Maryland residents during this health and financial crisis.”

Last year, nine out of 10 Marylanders who enrolled through Maryland Health Connection were eligible for free coverage or financial help to lower the cost of their coverage. This special enrollment period is for enrollment in private health plans. Those who qualify for Medicaid may enroll any time of year.

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

About Maryland Health Connection: One of every six Marylanders receive their health coverage through Maryland Health Connection (MHC), the state-based health insurance marketplace. Residents can compare and enroll in health insurance as well as determine eligibility for Medicaid or financial help with private plans.