

Media Release

**MARYLAND HEALTH BENEFIT EXCHANGE CELEBRATES
TOP AUTHORIZED HEALTH INSURANCE BROKERS**

BALTIMORE (May 8, 2023) – Maryland Health Benefit Exchange (MHBE) celebrated the top three Maryland Health Connection (MHC) Authorized Brokers, and top 100, for their outstanding commitment and dedication to helping 182,166 Marylanders enroll in health insurance coverage during open enrollment 2023. The Broker Achievement Awards recognized MHC brokers for their unwavering support and responsiveness in making this year’s enrollment numbers the highest since MHBE’s inception in 2011.

The top three brokers recognized during the Broker Achievement Awards were Eugene Poole of Aligned Benefits Group, Inc. in Upper Marlboro, MD for highest enrollment in the MHC for Small Business category; Wonde Desalegn, of Spring Financial Services, in Silver Spring, MD for highest enrollment in the Individual Market; and Jon Levine of Viking Benefit Solutions in Ellicott City, MD for top broker in the Broker Assistance Transfer or BATPhone category – a program developed by MHBE to help Marylanders who call the call center and need help choosing a plan get transferred to an authorized broker.

In addition, MHBE celebrated the top 100 brokers for their perseverance and sales performance in the small business and individual market categories. A list of all recognized brokers is on the MHBE website at marylandhbe.com.

“Maryland Health Benefit Exchange is proud to celebrate our key partners for their dedication and commitment to helping Marylanders enroll in quality, affordable health coverage,” said Michele Eberle, executive director of the Maryland Health Benefit Exchange. “A record number of Marylanders enrolled in health coverage through Maryland Health Connection for 2023, and we want to take this opportunity to thank and recognize all of our authorized brokers for their continued efforts and outstanding customer service,” Eberle continued.

Total enrollment grew five consecutive years and by more than 15 percent since just before Covid-19 and the public health emergency.

Although total enrollment was up just slightly from a year ago, when 181,603 enrolled, progress continued with communities who have proportionately lacked health coverage, such as Black and Hispanic residents.

Enrollment by individuals who self-identified as Black grew by nearly 3 percent to 31,325 from 30,535 a year ago.

Enrollment by Hispanic residents grew by 9 percent to 22,106 from 20,241 a year ago. It grew even more so among Hispanic young adults ages 18-34: by nearly 13 percent in just one year, from 5,572 to 6,286.

Overall, renewal enrollments were up 4 percent to 147,961, from 141,945 a year ago. New enrollments were down 14 percent, to 34,205 from 39,658 a year ago. Also, enrollments by people ineligible for a federal tax credit grew 13 percent, to 43,821 from 38,953 a year ago. Enrollments with federal financial help dipped by 3 percent, to 138,345 from 142,650 a year ago.

Even after open enrollment, opportunities for people to enroll who lack coverage will continue.

Marylanders who check a box on their state tax returns are still able to enroll in the “Easy Enrollment” program offered through the office of the Comptroller. Since Maryland launched “Easy Enrollment” four years ago, more than 10,000 people have gained coverage through it, a half-dozen states have copied it, and federal legislation co-sponsored by U.S. Sen. Chris Van Hollen of Maryland seeks to roll it out nationwide.

Marylanders who lose their jobs and file for unemployment insurance can also check a box during that application process to request help with health coverage. More than 3,000 have done so since that program launched last summer in cooperation with the Maryland Department of Labor.

MHBE and the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) have put plans in place to help tens of thousands of people in need of health insurance as they become disenrolled from Medicaid this year. Eligibility rules to remain in Medicaid coverage had been eased nearly three years ago in response to the public health threat, but the federal government is ending that emergency policy. MHBE and MDH began a campaign to reach out to everyone affected. Most will have the option to transition immediately into low-cost private coverage through Maryland Health Connection. Anyone who is eligible for Medicaid can enroll any time.

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Maryland Health Benefit Exchange (MHBE), a public corporation and independent unit of state government established in 2011, administers Maryland Health Connection.

Maryland Health Connection (MHC) 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. It is the only place where Marylanders can access financial help such as tax credits to make coverage more affordable.

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