



**Maryland Health Benefit Exchange**

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**MARYLAND LAUNCHES HEALTH INSURANCE CONSUMER ASSISTANCE PROGRAM TO READY RESIDENTS AND SMALL EMPLOYERS FOR OPEN ENROLLMENT THROUGH [MARYLAND HEALTH CONNECTION](#)**

***Maryland Health Benefit Exchange selects HealthCare Access Maryland to educate and enroll uninsured residents and small employers in Central Maryland***

BALTIMORE (April 25, 2013)—The [Maryland Health Benefit Exchange](#) (MHBE), the public corporation and unit of Maryland State government responsible for the implementation of the state-based insurance exchange through the Affordable Care Act, announced today the launch of its Connector Program with the award of an anticipated \$24 million in grant funds to six organizations serving as consumer assistance and enrollment resources throughout the state. HealthCare Access Maryland (HCAM) will serve as the prime grantee for a period of 12 months beginning July 1<sup>st</sup> to meet the needs of individuals and small employers in Baltimore City, Baltimore County and Anne Arundel County through outreach and education, eligibility determination and enrollment into Medicaid and qualified health plans. The regional approach ensures that the needs of Maryland’s uninsured and underserved communities are provided with in-person assistance as the new health insurance coverage options become available in October 2013 through Maryland Health Connection, the state-based health insurance marketplace.

***“I’m proud to announce this important investment in Maryland’s health care system,” said Lt. Governor Anthony Brown. “By working together to implement the Affordable Care Act, we aren’t just helping Marylanders get the care they need, we’re also creating over 300 jobs across our state.”***

HealthCare Access Maryland will receive an anticipated \$7.9 million in grant funding to provide education, outreach, and eligibility, and enrollment services for the nearly 217,000 uninsured residents in the counties it serves. The intent of the regional approach is to ensure that all populations are reached including those with Limited English Proficiency, disabilities or those that may be in underserved communities. HCAM has developed a collaborative approach with 17 subcontracting partners to provide services, including:

- Anne Arundel Medical Center
- Baltimore City Health Department
- Baltimore Healthy Start
- Baltimore Medical System
- Charm City Clinic
- Chase Brexton
- Chatman, LLC
- Healthcare for the Homeless
- Independent Marylanders Achieving Growth Through Empowerment, Inc.
- Mental Health Association of Maryland
- Mercy Hospital
- Mosaic Community Services
- Park Heights Community Alliance
- Planned Parenthood
- St. Stephens AME Church
- The Coordinating Center
- The Maryland Medical Society (MedChi)

***“Creating a customized outreach program for each region will allow the navigators to address the specific needs and resources of Marylanders throughout the state,” said Dr. Joshua M. Sharfstein, Secretary of the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene and chair of the Board of the Maryland Health Benefit Exchange***

The Central Region will employ a workforce of 107 navigators and assisters to provide outreach and education, with a particular focus on hard-to-reach populations. Trained and certified navigators will counsel and enroll residents into qualified health plans and Medicaid through Maryland Health Connection, the state-based insurance marketplace scheduled to open on October 1, 2013. Non-certified personnel, known as “assisters,” will be trained to provide information, assistance and enrollment into Medicaid. Navigators and assisters will provide information about eligibility requirements for federal premium subsidies and cost-sharing assistance, and assess eligibility requirements for Medicaid and Maryland Children’s Health Program.

*“HCAM is excited and proud to have been selected as the Connector Entity for the Central Region,” said Kathleen Westcoat, HCAM’s President and CEO. “HCAM and our partners stand ready to help the estimated 217,000 people in Baltimore City and Baltimore and Anne Arundel Counties who are without health insurance navigate the insurance marketplace and facilitate their enrollment in Medicaid or another qualified health plan. Our successful 15 years of ‘boots-on-the-ground’ experience and the strategic partnerships we have formed in the central region will help position Maryland as a national leader in implementing the Affordable Care Act.”*

*“We are pleased to have HCAM serve as a Connector Entity in Central Maryland given their extensive experience and qualified team,” said Rebecca Pearce, Executive Director of the Maryland Health Benefit Exchange. “The partners they have identified for this program will add to their expertise and ensure that the needs of those with disabilities and language barriers are met.”*

Navigators and in-person assisters will provide referrals to appropriate agencies, including the Attorney General’s Health Education and Advocacy Unit (HEAU) and the Maryland Insurance Administration (MIA) for applicants and enrollees with grievances, complaints, questions or the need for other social services through the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene and the Department of Human Resources (Social Services).

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**About Maryland Health Connection:** Maryland Health Connection is the marketplace for individuals, families and small businesses 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. Enrollment through Maryland Health Connection is scheduled to begin in October 2013, with insurance coverage beginning January 1, 2014. An estimated 180,000 individuals are expected to enroll in qualified health plans (QHPs) during the first year. [www.MarylandHealthConnection.gov](http://www.MarylandHealthConnection.gov)

**About Maryland Health Benefit Exchange:** The Maryland Health Benefit Exchange (MHBE) is a public corporation and independent unit of the State government established in April 2011 in accordance with the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010 (ACA). The (MHBE) has a nine member Board of Trustees that includes the Secretary of Health and Mental Hygiene, Maryland Insurance Commissioner and Executive Director of the Maryland Health Care Commission. The MHBE is responsible for the administration of the Maryland Health Connection. [www.MarylandHBE.com](http://www.MarylandHBE.com).

**About HealthCare Access Maryland:** HealthCare Access Maryland, Inc. is a nonprofit agency that plays a critical role in strengthening Maryland’s health care delivery system. Working with both government and private-sector support, HealthCare Access Maryland helps residents enroll in public health care coverage and navigate the complex health care system.