

Regional Update from
HHS Regional Director Susan Johnson
Region 10 - Alaska, Idaho, Oregon, and Washington



Dear Colleagues,

July 2013

We're counting down to October 1st when open enrollment starts for the new Health Insurance Marketplaces. When you go to enroll, you'll get the information you need to help you learn about your insurance options, to apply for coverage, and to enroll in a health insurance plan.

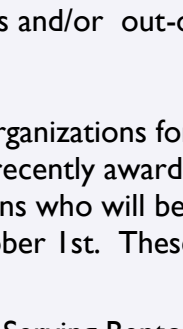
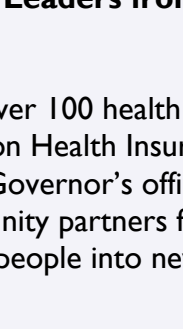
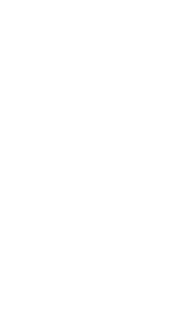


Even though October is not that far away, there are still many people who don't know about the new Marketplaces - and - many of them will be eligible for help to reduce the cost of available insurance. We need to get the word out about the coverage options and financial help that are coming. I hope you'll join me in getting the word out by becoming a Champion for Coverage! Champions for Coverage help us make sure all Americans can get the care they need, when they need it, at a price they can afford.



Ways your organization can be a Champion for Coverage:

1. Send your partners/members/customers to the official consumer sources to learn about the Marketplace and get coverage:
 - HealthCare.gov
 - CuidadoDeSalud.gov
 - 24/7 Consumer Call Center: 1-800-318-2596
2. Send an email to your network about the Marketplace.
3. Post the HealthCare.gov and/or CuidadoDeSalud.gov [widget](#) on your website.
4. Hang [posters](#) and/or give out [fact sheets](#) and [brochures](#) about the Marketplace.
5. Host a conference call, webinar, or another educational event about the Marketplace.
6. Include a story about the Marketplace in your organizational newsletter or other publication.
7. Record and send out a [public service announcement](#) about the Marketplace.
8. Have your staff/members learn about the Marketplace in [educational sessions](#).
9. Connect with your partners/members/customers through official Marketplace social media channels to share their stories:
 - Facebook.com/HealthCare.gov
 - Facebook.com/CuidadoDeSalud.gov
 - [@HealthCareGov](https://Twitter.com/HealthCareGov)
 - [@CuidadoDeSalud](https://Twitter.com/CuidadoDeSalud)
10. Provide space for enrollment sessions or fairs (ideally, with computers so people can check out the Marketplace online).



How can your organization become a "Champion for Coverage?" First, take action – post the Marketplace widget, send an email message, or more. If you're interested in being publicly recognized as an official "Champion for Coverage," fill out our [online form](#). Once we get your information, we'll follow up with you. If you have questions, send an email to champion@cms.hhs.gov.

Spread the word—explore the Marketplace, get ready to enroll, and become a Champion for Coverage!

Regards,
Susan

Spotlight on Washington

Washington Enrollment Summit Draws Health Care Leaders from Around the State

On July 16th, Washington held an Enrollment Summit with over 100 health care leaders from across the state. At the Summit, the Washington Health Insurance Marketplace, called Washington HealthPlanFinder, the Governor's office, and the Office of the Insurance Commissioner rallied community partners from across the state as they launched efforts to enroll uninsured people into new coverage options.

[Washington HealthPlanFinder](#) gave a demonstration of their website where Washingtonians can go to shop for coverage starting October 1st this year. Through the HealthPlanFinder Washingtonians will also be able to learn if they qualify for subsidies to bring down the cost of their premiums and/or out-of-pocket costs.

Many of the participants in the room were part of the lead organizations for in-person consumer assistance. Washington HealthPlanFinder recently awarded nearly \$6 million in grants funds to these ten lead organizations who will be enrolling people throughout the state in coverage starting October 1st. These organizations and their service areas include:

- Benton Franklin Community Action Connections: Serving Benton, Franklin and Walla Walla Counties

- CHOICE Regional Health Network: Serving Clallam, Grays Harbor, Jefferson, Lewis, Mason, Pacific and Thurston Counties

- Clark County Public Health: Serving Clark, Klickitat and Skamania Counties

- Cowlitz Family Health Center: Serving Cowlitz and Wahkiakum Counties

- Empire Health Foundation: Serving Adams, Asotin, Chelan, Columbia, Douglas, Ferry, Garfield, Grant, Lincoln, Okanogan, Pend Oreille, Stevens, Spokane and Whitman Counties

- Kitsap Public Health District: Serving Kitsap County

- Public Health – Seattle & King County: Serving King County

- Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department: Serving Pierce County

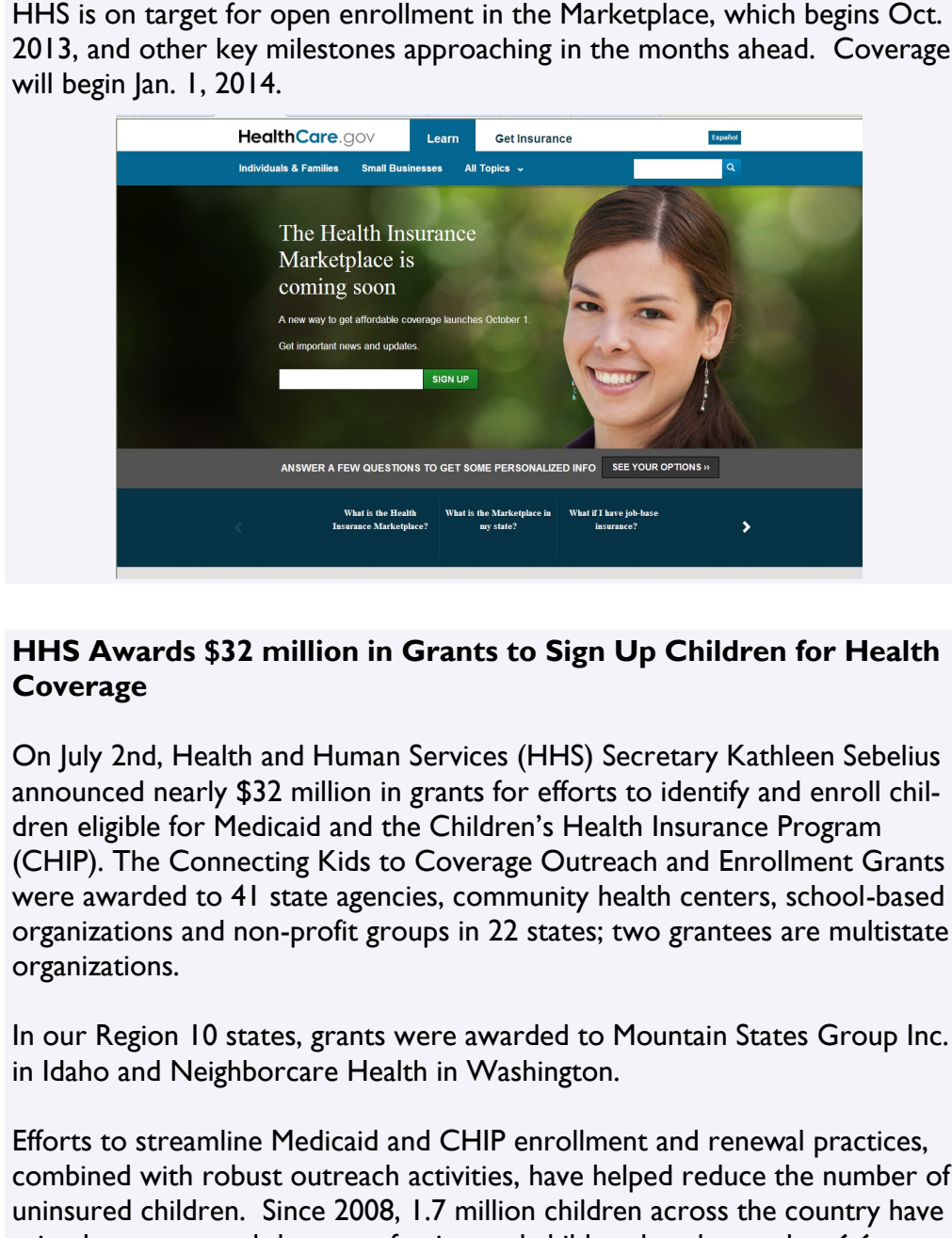
- Whatcom Alliance for Health Advancement: Serving Island, San Juan, Skagit, Snohomish and Whatcom Counties

- Yakima Neighborhood Health Services: Serving Kittitas and Yakima Counties

[Click here](#) to read the announcement about the lead organizations in Washington.

In addition, at the Enrollment Summit the Washington Health Care Authority discussed their coordination efforts with Washington HealthPlanFinder. Washington State recently approved Medicaid expansion, which will give people up to 138% of the poverty level access to Medicaid. With this decision, [the Health Care Authority has announced](#) that expanded Medicaid in Washington will be called Apple Health. This consolidates the program with the children's program "Apple Health For Kids".

All of this activity highlights that Washington is a leader in the country: setting up their Marketplace, moving forward with Medicaid Expansion, and bringing community groups together to coordinate outreach efforts.



Speaking at the *Coverage is Here* Washington Enrollment Summit.

Recent HHS Events & Announcements

Becoming a Certified Application Counselor Organization—CMS Trainings and Certification Now Available to Federally Facilitated Marketplace States

Want to find out how your organization can help millions of Americans get health coverage? If you're interested in training your staff and volunteers to assist people applying for coverage through the Federally-facilitated Marketplace (including a State Partnership Marketplace), you can apply to be a Certified Application Counselor (CAC) organization. Applications are now available for interested organizations to complete at <http://marketplace.cms.gov/help-us/cac.html>.

The CMS run Certified Application Counselor program is open to states who have either a Federally Facilitated Marketplace or a State Partnership Marketplace. This means that in our Region 10 states, groups and organizations in **Alaska** are eligible to apply. Interested organizations in Idaho, Oregon, and Washington should contact their State Marketplaces.

What does a CAC organization do?

As a CAC organization, your staff and volunteers will help people understand, apply, and enroll for health coverage through the Marketplace. Your organization must agree to make sure that designated individuals complete required training, and that they comply with privacy and security laws, and other program standards.

Your organization must:

1. Have processes in place to screen your staff to make sure that they protect consumer information
2. Engage in services that position you to help those you serve with health coverage issues
3. Have experience providing social services to the community

Join us for a foundational training session that will cover what you need to know to become a Certified Application Counselor (CAC) organization. Topics include:

- Requirements for a CAC organization
- How to apply to be a CAC organization
- Overview of training requirements
- Marketplace eligibility and enrollment
- Medicaid expansion
- The streamlined application process

Choose the session that works for you below and click on the Webinar link to register.

Date	Time	Webinar Link
July 31, 2013	1:30 – 3:00 pm ET	https://goto.webcasts.com/starthere.jsp?ei=1020077
August 1, 2013	1:30 – 3:00 pm ET	https://goto.webcasts.com/starthere.jsp?ei=1019916
August 5, 2013	1:30 – 3:00 pm ET	https://goto.webcasts.com/starthere.jsp?ei=1020167
August 7, 2013	1:30 – 3:00 pm ET	https://goto.webcasts.com/starthere.jsp?ei=1020171

Webinar audio will be delivered over the Internet (VOIP) and will play through your computer speakers, or you can stream audio from a mobile device (smart phone or tablet).

If you can't play the audio through your computer, e-mail training@cms.hhs.gov to make alternate arrangements.

Visit HealthCare.gov to learn more about the Health Insurance Marketplace. Open enrollment begins on October 1, 2013 for coverage starting as early as January 2014.

Questions or Concerns? Contact HHSIEA@hhs.gov.

HHS Launches Health Insurance Marketplace Educational Tools

The Department of Health and Human Services recently kicked off our Health Insurance Marketplace education effort with a new, consumer-focused HealthCare.gov website and the 24-hours-a-day consumer call center to help Americans prepare for open enrollment and ultimately sign up for private health insurance. These new tools will help Americans understand their choices and select the coverage that best suits their needs when open enrollment in the new Health Insurance Marketplace begins October 1.

The new website and toll-free number have a simple mission: to make sure every American who needs health coverage has the information they need to make choices that are right for themselves and their families—or their businesses.

The re-launched Healthcare.gov and new call center will help consumers prepare for the new coverage opportunities coming later this year. In October, HealthCare.gov will be the online destination for consumers to compare and enroll in affordable, qualified health plans.

Americans may now access new educational information and learn what they can do to begin to get ready for open enrollment this fall. The website will add functionality over the summer so that, by October, consumers will be able to create accounts, complete an online application, and shop for qualified health plans. For Spanish speaking consumers, CuidadoDeSalud.gov will also be updated to match HealthCare.gov's new consumer focus.

Key features of the website, based on consumer research and online commercial best practices include integration of social media, sharable content, and engagement destinations for consumers to get more information.

The website is built with a responsive design so that consumers may access it from their desktops, smart-phones, and other mobile devices.

Between now and the start of open enrollment, the Marketplace call center will provide educational information and, beginning Oct. 1, 2013, will assist consumers with application completion and plan selection. In addition to English and Spanish, the call center provides assistance in more than 150 languages through an interpretation and translation service. Customer service representatives are available for assistance via a toll-free number at **1-800-318-2596** and hearing impaired callers using TTY/TDD technology can dial 1-855-889-4325 for assistance.

To view the new look and new focus of the website, visit www.HealthCare.gov.

HHS is on target for open enrollment in the Marketplace, which begins Oct. 1, 2013, and other key milestones approaching in the months ahead. Coverage will begin Jan. 1, 2014.

HHS Awards \$32 million in Grants to Sign Up Children for Health Coverage

On July 2nd, Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary Kathleen Sebelius announced nearly \$32 million in grants for efforts to identify and enroll children eligible for Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). The Connecting Kids to Coverage Outreach and Enrollment Grants were awarded to 41 state agencies, community health centers, school-based organizations and non-profit groups in 22 states; two grantees are multistate organizations.

In our Region 10 states, grants were awarded to Mountain States Group Inc. in Idaho and Neighborcare Health in Washington.

Efforts to streamline Medicaid and CHIP enrollment and renewal practices, combined with robust outreach activities, have helped reduce the number of uninsured children. Since 2008, 1.7 million children across the country have gained coverage and the rate of uninsured children has dropped to 6.6 percent in 2012.

Grants were made in five focus areas:

- Engaging schools in outreach, enrollment and retention activities (9 awards);
- Reducing health coverage disparities by reaching out to subgroups of children that are less likely to have health coverage (8 awards);
- Streamlining enrollment for individuals participating in other public benefit programs such as nutritional or other assistance programs (3 awards);
- Improving application assistance resources to provide high quality, reliable Medicaid and CHIP enrollment and renewal services in local communities (13 awards); and
- Training communities to help families understand the new application and enrollment system and to deliver effective assistance to families with children eligible for Medicaid or CHIP (8 awards).

These awards are part of the \$140 million included in the Affordable Care Act and the Children's Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act (CHIPRA) of 2009 for enrollment and renewal outreach.

The grants will build on the Secretary's Connecting Kids to Coverage Challenge to find and enroll all eligible children and support outreach strategies that have been shown to be successful.

Grant amounts range from \$190,000 to \$1 million.

[Click here](#) for a list of grantees.

Learn more at <http://www.insurekidsnow.gov/>

Finalizing Policies to Ensure Navigators Will Help Consumers Enroll in the Health Insurance Marketplace

On July 12th, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) took the next step in moving toward implementation by finalizing a proposed rule outlining the standards for Navigators, the in-person assisters in Federally-facilitated and State Partnership Marketplaces. State-based Marketplaces have the option of using this guidance or developing their own. The rule identifies training, conflict of interest standards, and standards for serving people with limited English proficiency and people with disabilities.

Navigators and similar in-person assisters will provide unbiased information to consumers about health insurance, the new Health Insurance Marketplaces, qualified health plans, and public programs including Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program.

If individuals request assistance and would like in-person assistance, navigators will be available nationwide when the marketplace opens. Navigators will be trained to play a vital role in fulfilling our commitment to help consumers learn about and apply for quality health insurance when open enrollment for consumers in the Marketplaces begins October 1.

Millions of Americans will be eligible for new coverage opportunities through the Marketplaces. Navigators will provide accurate and impartial assistance to consumers shopping for coverage in the new Marketplace, including consumers who are not familiar with health insurance, have limited English proficiency, or are living with a disability. Grant awards for Navigators in states with Federally-facilitated Marketplaces, including Alaska, will be awarded on August 15, 2013.

In addition to Navigators, Marketplace consumers will have access to assistance through services such as a call center, where consumers can receive help with the eligibility and enrollment process. The call center will also provide referrals to the appropriate state or federal agencies, or other assistance programs including in-person assistance personnel, certified application counselors, and agents and brokers. The final rule also outlines the standards for certified application counselors, including training, qualifications, and requirements to ensure that they provide quality, sound, consumer-protective assistance.

Open enrollment in the Marketplace begins October 1, 2013, with coverage to begin January 1, 2014.

[Click here](#) to learn more about helping consumers apply and enroll in health coverage through the Marketplace.

[Click here](#) to access the final rule on navigators.

Grant Opportunities and Available Resources

For HHS funding resources, please visit the [HHS Grants/Funding site](#) or [FYI: Minority Resources..Money & More](#), a newsletter published by the Office of Minority Health Resource Center.

Urban Indian Education and Research Organization Cooperative Agreement Program (Tribal Eligible)—The Indian Health Service (IHS) is accepting applications for the Urban Indian Education and Research Organization Cooperative Agreement Program. The Office of Urban Indian Health Programs (OUIHP) oversees the implementation of the Indian Health Care Improvement Act (IHCA) provisions for making health services more accessible to urban Indians. The purpose of this IHS cooperative agreement is to fund a national urban Indian organization to act as an education and research partner for OUIHP and urban Indian organizations funded under the IHCA. The deadline for submission is August 13, 2013. [View Full Announcement](#)

Runaway and Homeless Youth Capacity Building for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and/or Questioning Youth Populations (Tribal Eligible)—The purpose of this grant is to build capacity of Transitional Living Programs (TLPs) to serve youth who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or questioning (LGBTQ) who are experiencing homelessness and who are disproportionately affected by homelessness than their heterosexual counterparts. The deadline for submission is August 13, 2013. [View Full Announcement](#)

Affordable Care Act – Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting Formula Grant Program (Tribal Eligible)— This announcement solicits applications for the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) formula grant program, established by the Affordable Care Act, to continue the delivery of early childhood home visiting program services. This formula grant program is designed to: (1) strengthen and improve the programs and activities carried out under Title V of the Social Security Act; (2) improve coordination of services for at-risk communities; and (3) identify and provide comprehensive services to improve outcomes for families who reside in at-risk communities. The deadline for submission is August 9, 2013. [View Full Announcement](#)

To remove your name from our mailing list, please [click here](#).

Questions or comments? Please contact me at susan.johnson@hhs.gov or 206-615-2012.