



WASHINGTON HEALTHPLANFINDER NEWS TODAY

January 2013

WELCOME TO OUR MONTHLY NEWSLETTER!

From the Desk of Richard Onizuka, Chief Executive Officer

Welcome to the first edition of *Washington Healthplanfinder News Today*. We appreciate your interest in our efforts and hope this monthly newsletter will be a helpful resource to keep you up-to-date on our progress toward readying Washington Healthplanfinder, our state's online health insurance exchange, for open enrollment starting Oct. 1, 2013.



The Exchange Draws Interest from Health Plan Carriers

The Exchange recently received notifications from leading health and dental insurance carriers of their intent to participate in Washington Healthplanfinder. Carriers were asked to submit their non-binding intent to participate by Jan. 22 in either the Individual or Small Business Health Options Program (SHOP), a new way for small businesses to offer health benefits like those covered by a typical employer plan. The Exchange will work with each carrier to offer coverage options that will help consumers choose a plan that fits their needs and budget. Specific plans and pricing will be reviewed by the Office of the Insurance Commissioner and announced before open enrollment next fall.

The Exchange Receives Conditional Approval from HHS!

As one of our most important milestones to date, we are thrilled to announce that we have recently received conditional approval of our state-based Exchange "blueprint" from the Department of Health & Human Services (HHS). The Blueprint outlines how the Exchange will be ready to operate Washington Healthplanfinder for open enrollment next fall. Because of our progress, we were asked to submit our blueprint early –beating the November 16 deadline by more than one month.

The term "conditional approval" means that we were able to demonstrate significant progress but can take additional time to complete one or more of the approval requirements. While there is still much work to be done, we are confident we will meet the necessary requirements to open our doors for business next fall.

Preparing for the Future

While the Exchange is currently funded by federal establishment grants, starting Jan. 1, 2015, the Affordable Care Act requires that all state-based health benefit exchanges become financially self-sustainable. As required by state statute, our Board submitted a report to the Washington State Legislature by Dec. 1, 2012, that outlines several revenue sources for consideration. The Legislature will decide which of these revenue options will be implemented.

Throughout this process, our end goal is to ensure we create a financially sustainable business model that enables us to continue our mission of increasing access to quality, affordable health care for thousands of families and small businesses across Washington State. The sustainability report can be viewed [here](#).

Thank you again for your interest in Washington Healthplanfinder. If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to reach us at: info@wahbexchange.org.

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PROGRESS UPDATES

Call Center Vendor Selected

Following a Request for Proposal (RFP), the Exchange has recently selected Faneuil Inc. as the apparent successful vendor for the Exchange's new call center. Faneuil Inc., which will base the call center in Washington State, will launch the call center beginning Sept. 1, 2013 – one month before open enrollment begins. Representatives will receive calls and answer questions about Washington Healthplanfinder services such as Qualified Health Plans (QHPs), the enrollment application and process, and eligibility for financial assistance and reduced co-pays and premiums.

The call center Request for Proposal (RFP) process began in Oct. 2012. Contract negotiations between the parties are still in progress and the finalized agreement will require approval from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. For more information, click [here](#).

Navigator Program Takes Shape

Starting Oct. 1, 2013, consumers will access Washington Healthplanfinder to compare and enroll in health insurance coverage and gain access to tax credits and reduced co-pays and deductibles. For those who need additional assistance selecting an appropriate health plan, the Exchange will offer comprehensive customer support services, including Navigators.

Washington Healthplanfinder Navigators will be trained and certified to:

- Provide individuals, families and small businesses in Washington State with impartial information to help them determine which health insurance option best fits their needs.
- Identify eligibility for reduced premiums and assist in completing applications through in-person meetings, phone calls, or interactive electronic communication.
- Offer tailored support for those with cultural, linguistic, disabilities or other special needs.

Early in 2013, the Washington Health Benefit Exchange plans to issue a Request for Proposal (RFP) in order to select organizations around the state to serve as Navigator Lead Organizations. Lead Organizations will build and oversee a Navigator Network made up of partners in a designated geographic area to serve our diverse populations, including existing coalitions, cultural centers, clinics and other community resources in all corners of the state.

First Phase of Exchange Website Development Complete

Through Washington Healthplanfinder, residents will be able to fill out a single online application to enroll in a health plan and determine eligibility for financial assistance and tax credits. To create this consumer-friendly experience, the Exchange is working with Deloitte LLP to develop a robust infrastructure technology system and website design. We are currently facilitating collaboration and user testing among Exchange staff, state and federal agencies, and other key stakeholders to ensure our end-product will meet the needs of Washington residents.

The Exchange is delighted to have recently finalized the “design phase” of the website. This includes the look and feel of the online marketplace, the consumer shopping experience and rating system, as well as the back-end infrastructure needed to interface with federal and state data hubs that are required for eligibility determinations. As we move into the “development phase” and beyond, we will continue to engage with various stakeholders to garner feedback on our work and escalate any key issues that need to be addressed.

Click [here](#) to view an initial demo of the website.



ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATES

Get Involved!

The Health Benefit Exchange is working to increase participation from consumers across the state to ensure that we are able to meet their needs and generate new ideas. We have formed a monthly Consumer Workgroup that allows community members and organizations to provide input on a variety of issues related to the Exchange. Consumers can email info@wahbexchange.org to sign up for the workgroup. They may also submit feedback through the following channels:

- In-person public comment periods during Board, Policy Committee and Operations Committee meetings, or email public comment to comment@wahbexchange.org.
- Focus groups (Branding, website user interface, etc.)
- Statewide public education meetings

Welcoming Pam Cowley, Outreach Manager

Pam will be responsible for developing education and engagement strategies with community organizations, business groups, hospitals and health centers to help drive enrollment in the Exchange. She joins us from the Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department and was recently a valued member of our Navigator Technical Advisory Committee where she distinguished herself as a leader through her commitment to the success of the Navigator Program and Exchange efforts. Welcome, Pam!

Upcoming Meetings

- [Board Meeting](#): Feb. 21, 2013
- [Operations Committee](#): Jan. 31, 2013
- [Policy Committee](#): Feb. 25, 2013
- [Consumer Workgroup](#): Jan. 30, 2013
- [Advisory Committee](#): Feb. 5, 2013
- [Role of Agents & Brokers](#): Feb. 14, 2013
- [Small Business TAC](#): Feb. 7, 2013
- [Navigator TAC](#): Jan. 31, 2013
- [Plan Management Workgroup](#): Feb. 12, 2013

Visit us online!

www.wahbexchange.org

Question of the Month

I'm an insurance agent or broker and I'm concerned about how I will integrate with Washington Healthplanfinder. Who can I talk to about my concerns?

Feedback from agents and brokers is of paramount importance to the Washington Health Benefit Exchange. We encourage producers to call into our Role of Agents & Brokers Technical Advisory Committee that explores topics such as how agents and brokers will be compensated, how the Exchange will impact costs and how they will be utilized in the SHOP or small business insurance market. The TAC also provides occasional demos of certain aspects of the Exchange to garner producer input. [Click here](#) for more information.

HELPFUL LINKS

[About the Exchange](#)
[Submit Public Comment](#)
[Board Members](#)
[FAQ](#)

PARTNERS

[Insurance Commissioner](#)
[Health Care Authority](#)

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