



Open Enrollment for the Affordable Care Act Begins Saturday!!

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Orange County, NC (November 13, 2014) – Saturday, November 15th is the first day of open enrollment for the Health Insurance Marketplace. Part of the Affordable Care Act, the Health Insurance Marketplace helps uninsured people find affordable health coverage. Staff and volunteers throughout Orange County are ready to assist people with enrolling in a plan that is right for them.

“I am so proud to be part of this community,” says Sherry Hay, Director of Community Health Initiatives for the Department of Family Medicine at UNC. “Together, we made a decision to help all uninsured individuals in Orange County understand more about their options and get covered. By collaborating and sharing resources, we achieved a high rate of success.”

In the first open enrollment period that ended on March 31, 2014, Orange County enrolled 46% of the County’s 10,729 people eligible for health insurance through the Affordable Care Act. This was a significant achievement compared to North Carolina’s overall average of approximately 33%.

“It was so exciting to be part of implementing the Affordable Care Act, and to assist people who have never before been able to afford health insurance get enrolled. Many of them were pleasantly surprised to learn that they could now afford to have the insurance they needed to take better care of their family’s health” said Amanda Bartolomeo, Public Health Educator in charge of the Orange County Health Department’s enrollment efforts. In fact, 91% of North Carolinians who enrolled in health insurance through the marketplace received subsidies from the federal government to help pay for their coverage.

Changes have been made to the online enrollment process, including the ability to get a financial assistance estimate without having to submit an application, as well as the ability to review plans by simply entering a zip code. Other improvements include the ability to access the window shopping tool via a smart phone or tablet and a higher capacity to handle high volumes of traffic.

The Health Insurance Marketplace is open for three months – November 15, 2014 until February 15, 2015. Orange County has a number of locations with certified enrollment counselors to assist people in both English and Spanish. Additional language services are available upon request at some of the locations.

There are three ways a person can enroll, or update their insurance plan via the Marketplace.

1) Online at www.HealthCare.gov

2) Over the phone: [1-800-318-2596](tel:1-800-318-2596)

3) Appointment with a certified enrollment counselor. Individuals can locate certified enrollment counselors by entering their town, city, or zip code on www.HealthCare.gov under “Find Local Help”.