



NEWS

For Immediate Release

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HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION URGES RE-ENROLLMENT IN HEALTHCARE PLANS

Sign up by Dec. 15 for coverage to begin Jan. 1 , group reminds Arkansans

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. (Nov. 21, 2014) – More than 200,000 Arkansans are among the millions of Americans who have signed up for affordable healthcare coverage through the Health Insurance Marketplace or Arkansas Private Option. The Arkansas Hospital Association reminds people that they have until Feb. 15 to re-enroll in those plans.

“We definitely want to encourage those without health insurance to sign up for affordable healthcare coverage, but we don’t want to forget about those who have already signed up,” said Bo Ryall, president and CEO of the Arkansas Hospital Association. “We’re already seeing the benefit. During the first six months of this year, the number of people hospitalized without insurance fell by almost 50 percent in Arkansas compared with the same period last year. We want those residents to continue receiving the care they need.”

Through the Marketplace, the uninsured can purchase insurance plans from commercial carriers that can be made more affordable by tax credits that are based on income level and family size. Some residents may be directed to enroll in the Arkansas Private Option, a program that uses federal dollars to buy private health insurance for residents with minimal income. The private option is this state’s innovative approach to Medicaid expansion.

Ryall said people who have purchased plans through the Marketplace should get two important notices about their health coverage: one from the health insurance company and one from the Marketplace.

“These notices are intended to help people understand their choices for 2015, so it’s important for residents to review them carefully and keep them in a safe place,” he said.

Some people may be automatically re-enrolled in their 2014 plan or a similar one. However, income and household information must be updated as soon as possible to be sure they get the right plan choices and amount of savings for 2015, Ryall said.

“If a person’s insurance company notice says he or she won’t be automatically enrolled in 2015, that person can enroll in any plan available through the Marketplace,” he said. “However, people must enroll by Dec. 15, 2014, to have coverage Jan. 1, 2015, because all 2014 Marketplace plans end Dec. 31, 2014, no matter when they enrolled.”

The Health Insurance Marketplace can be accessed online at HealthCare.gov. Uninsured Arkansans can compare plans before purchasing and are not required to create an account to do so. The website also features a searchable database for those who would like to find local in-person assistance enrolling. Anyone without Internet access can reach the Health Insurance Marketplace by calling 800-318-2596.

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About the Arkansas Hospital Association

The Arkansas Hospital Association assists 104 member hospitals in Arkansas through advocacy, education, quality improvement and policy analysis.