

Groups get \$67M to guide uninsured through health care marketplace (Update)

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(HealthDay)—The Obama administration said Thursday that it has given \$67 million in grants to 105 community groups to help the uninsured choose and sign up for coverage when new health insurance marketplaces kick in this fall.

Many Americans may feel bewildered by the new system of health insurance exchanges created by the Affordable Care Act. But these "navigator" groups are meant to be intermediaries helping people find the coverage plan that's right for them.

Enrollment for the new coverage options in the marketplaces begins Oct. 1 and actual benefits start Jan. 1

"Navigators will be among the many resources available to help consumers understand their coverage options in the marketplace," Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary Kathleen Sebelius said in a department news release.

"A network of volunteers on the ground in every state—health care providers, business leaders, faith leaders, community groups, advocates, and local elected officials—can help spread the word and encourage their neighbors to get enrolled," she said.

The program grants were open to eligible private and public groups and self-employed people who met certain standards. They are required to follow strict security and privacy standards, including how to protect

consumers' personal information, HHS said.

Navigators will have to complete 20 to 30 hours of training to be certified, will take additional training throughout the year, and will renew their certification yearly.

In the same announcement, HHS also recognized more than 100 national organizations and businesses that have volunteered to help people learn about the health care coverage available in the marketplace.

HHS said these latest initiatives add to the resources available to help people shop for and select coverage in the health insurance marketplace. Consumers can learn about and enroll in coverage later this fall through HealthCare.gov, and HHS launched a 24-hour call center ready to answer questions in 150 languages.

More than 1,200 community health centers nationwide are preparing to help enroll uninsured Americans. And a partnership with the Institute of Museum and Library Services will help local libraries be a resource for consumers who want information on their insurance options. In addition, HHS said it has started training other individuals who will provide in-person assistance, such as agents and brokers and certified application counselors.

More information: The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services has more about [in-person assistance in the health insurance marketplace](#).

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