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## **6,000 Oregon Health Plan applications to be mailed Friday; more than 5,300 people found eligible so far**

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A seventh round of applications giving selected low-income Oregonians a chance to apply for coverage under the Oregon Health Plan's Standard benefit package will be mailed Friday.

The 6,000 OHP-Standard applications will go to people whose names were randomly drawn from a reservation list on which more than 91,000 Oregonians' names were placed last winter. A final 3,000 applications will be mailed Oct. 7.

Friday's mailing will bring to 27,000 the number of applications mailed since March.

"For the more than 5,300 low-income people found eligible so far, having medical coverage can be a life-changing experience," said Jim Edge, state Medicaid director in the Oregon Department of Human Services. "But new Census Bureau data estimate 621,000 Oregonians still are without health insurance – or about one Oregonian in six."

OHP-Standard provides Medicaid coverage for low-income adults who do not qualify for traditional Medicaid. The program was temporarily reopened to limited new enrollment this year after having been closed since mid-2004. The program's budget will support a monthly average of 24,000 adults, although an estimated 140,000 Oregon adults would be eligible.

The program currently covers approximately 25,250 people. (Because fewer than 24,000 people were covered during the first half of the two-year budget period, more than that can be covered during the second half.)

OHP-Standard accounts for roughly 5 percent of the approximately 430,000 people whom the Oregon Health Plan covers. The larger OHP-Plus program is always open to low-income Oregonians who are 65 or older, blind, disabled, pregnant, younger than 19 or who qualify for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families. Applications are available by calling 1-800-359-9517 weekdays between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m., Pacific time.

The 10 counties whose residents will receive the largest numbers of OHP-Standard applications in Friday's mailing are Multnomah (1,510), Lane (691), Marion (462), Washington (460), Clackamas (348), Jackson (347), Douglas (285), Josephine (187), Deschutes (181) and Linn (170). Those receiving fewer than 25 are rural Gilliam, Grant, Harney, Lake, Morrow, Sherman and Wallowa counties. No applications will be mailed this month to rural Wheeler, which had the fewest names on the reservation list (35) and whose residents have received applications in some prior months.

OHP-Standard covers physician services, prescription drugs, mental health and chemical dependency treatment, emergency medical services and limited dental, hospital and vision services. Adults in the program pay monthly premiums ranging from nothing to \$20, depending on income and household size.

To qualify for OHP-Standard, an applicant must show three months' consecutive income that averages less than the federal poverty level (\$867 monthly for an individual or \$1,467 for a household of three, for example). To qualify, applicants also must provide income documentation and proof of citizenship and identity. State health plan officials will look up birth certificates for people born in Oregon and will hold incomplete applications for people who are making a good-faith effort to obtain documents. People with questions about how to complete the application may call 1-800-699-9075 for assistance.

Oct. 23 is the deadline for returning the applications being mailed Friday.

Meanwhile, Sept. 22 is the deadline for people to return applications that were mailed in early August. Applications may be returned to the Salem processing center or to any DHS local office.

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