

NEWS RELEASE



Date: Jan. 28, 2010

General questions: Nelsa Brodie 503-945-5690

Subject: Low-income Oregonians have a chance for health care coverage

Low-income Oregonians have a chance for health care coverage

The Oregon Department of Human Services (DHS) and the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) are spreading the word to low-income Oregonians that they have an opportunity for health care. The 2009 Legislature provided funding for coverage for an additional 35,000 low-income Oregon adults through the Oregon Health Plan (OHP). However, DHS estimates there are approximately 140,000 Oregonians whose incomes would qualify them for this coverage.

To ensure everyone qualified has an equal opportunity for the coverage, state health workers are trying to reach as many people as possible to let them know it is available. Anyone who contacts the state will be added to the Oregon Health Plan reservation list, which will be the source of monthly drawings for health care coverage. People who qualify, based on income status and other factors, will be able to join the Oregon Health Plan Standard insurance coverage.

“Everyone without health insurance is at greater risk for serious disease because of delayed treatment or lack of preventive care, which is a tragedy for them and a greater cost to society. Today we have the opportunity to lessen that burden, but we have to make sure everyone who qualifies has an equal chance,” says Bruce Goldberg, M.D., director of DHS and the OHA.

DHS has set up a Web site and toll-free number for people to add their names to the reservation list. The agency is working with health care providers in local communities to help spread the word about the available health care coverage.

To add your name to the list, go to www.oregon.gov/DHS/open or call **1-800-699-9075**. You can also go to a local Department of Human Services office to request a reservation packet. Local county health departments, most hospitals and health care clinics also have reservation packets.

(More)

NEWS RELEASE



Low-income Oregonians have a chance for health care coverage, Pg. 2

“Every day at Central City Concern we see people who lack health insurance,” says Carole Romm, MPA, RN, director, community partnerships and strategic development, Central City Concern in Portland. “Although OHP cannot help everyone who needs it, we’re happy that the list is open and more people will be able to get the health care they need.”

The next drawing from the current list of names will be Feb. 1, and drawings will be held on a regular basis until all funded health care coverage is filled. Once a person’s name is drawn, he or she will be sent an application packet to apply for the health plan. Eligibility is based on strict income limits of less than the federal poverty level, which is based on the number of people in a household. For example, the limit is \$903 for an individual or \$1,526 for a family of three.

The Oregon Health Plan is part of the new Oregon Health Authority. The OHA is the central location for publicly purchased health care in Oregon, including the Oregon Health Plan and coverage for teachers or public employees. The Health Authority’s mission is to lower costs for everyone in the health care system while increasing access to care and improving the quality of care. As part of the reform efforts, the 2009 Legislature also passed health care funding for all Oregon children.

OHP-Standard covers physician services, prescription drugs, mental health and chemical dependency treatment, emergency medical services and limited dental, hospital and vision services.

#

#

#