



## News Release

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### **HOSPITALS ENROLLING UNINSURED MARYLANDERS**

*Maryland hospitals are hosting open enrollment events during Cover the Uninsured Week.*

This week, more than 20 Maryland hospitals are participating in the nationally-designated *Cover the Uninsured Week* by hosting events to spread the word that Maryland has affordable health coverage options. Events include free screening and counseling for Maryland residents who are without health insurance coverage; open enrollment exhibits at community venues; stations at the local food banks to help educate people on what programs they might qualify for; and exhibit booths at hospitals to provide free education and counseling for health assistance and financial assistance (see attachment for complete schedule).

There are nearly 760,000 Marylanders living without health care coverage, of which 150,000 are children. Many of these uninsured residents are eligible for low-cost programs or health care coverage at no-cost through Medical Assistance.

“At a time when many are losing their jobs, these open enrollment events are especially important,” said MHA President Carmela Coyle. “Hospitals are an essential safety net for the uninsured – providing care to all who walk through their doors regardless of their ability to pay—it is critical for Marylanders to know they don’t have to wait to get care.”

Now in its seventh year, *Cover the Uninsured Week* is the largest mobilization in history to shine a national spotlight on the need to secure health coverage for all Americans. Sponsored by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, this year’s effort focuses on the pressing need for comprehensive, bipartisan health reform.

For Maryland, this year’s *Cover the Uninsured Week* is an opportunity to celebrate the great strides the state has made to improve access to affordable health care. Through legislation such as Medicaid expansion and the Working Families and Small Business Act, more Marylanders have access to affordable health care than ever before.

“This campaign provides hospitals and health care organizations the opportunity to work together and acknowledge that health coverage for all Marylanders is a widely shared community value,” said DHMH Secretary John M. Colmers. “Often the uninsured get their health care too late through expensive emergency room visits; costing everyone more in the long run. When we cover the uninsured, the whole community benefits.”

During *Cover the Uninsured Week*, events will take place nationwide, including press conferences, health and enrollment fairs, business events, campus outreach and interfaith activities. For more information about events in Maryland, visit:

<http://www.dhmf.state.md.us/gethealthcare/mdhealth.htm> or  
[http://www.mdhospitals.org/mha/cover\\_the\\_uninsured.shtml](http://www.mdhospitals.org/mha/cover_the_uninsured.shtml).

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MHA is the advocate for Maryland hospitals, health systems, and their patients before legislative and regulatory bodies. Its membership is comprised of community and teaching hospitals, health systems, specialty hospitals, veterans hospitals, and long-term care facilities. For more information, visit [www.mdhospitals.org](http://www.mdhospitals.org).