



MEDIA RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Howard Co. Uninsured Have Access to Health Care Healthy Howard Access Plan Enrolls First Members

Columbia, MD - Enrollment in the Healthy Howard Access Plan, the first-of-its-kind plan to bring affordable health care access to the uninsured of Howard County, began yesterday at the East Columbia Library. After months of collaboration, the Healthy Howard Access Plan is connecting 2,200 Howard County residents to affordable health care services.

"We couldn't continue to wait for the federal government to act. We felt it was imperative that we attempt this ambitious proposal now, and I knew Dr. Beilenson was the right person to make it happen. We believe this program will get people healthy, save lives, and drive down skyrocketing medical costs" said Howard County Executive Ken Ulman. "We are very excited to be launching this groundbreaking initiative that will benefit so many hard-working families" added Dr. Peter Beilenson, Howard County Health Officer.

"No one should have to choose between going in for a doctor's checkup and putting food on the table," said Senator Barbara A. Mikulski. "I want to congratulate Ken Ulman and Dr. Beilenson for their bold new initiative, which will give more Howard County residents the health services they need and deserve. They saw a critical problem-and they came up with an innovative solution to tackle it. I stand ready to do my part in the United States Senate to make sure that every American has access to quality, affordable health care." County Executive Ken Ulman added "We couldn't continue to wait for the federal government to act. We felt it was imperative that we attempt this ambitious proposal now, and I knew Dr. Beilenson was the right person to make it happen. We believe this program will get people healthy, save lives, and drive down skyrocketing medical costs.

Access to quality, affordable health services is necessary, but to improve the overall health of Howard County residents, an integral part of the Healthy Howard Plan is the Health Coach program. Built on

Page two

October 1, 2008

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a chronic disease management model, this innovative effort will help residents overcome barriers to health goals, improve the public health of our community, and reduce local health care costs. Everyone enrolled in our Healthy Howard Plan will be matched with a Health Coach to help formulate a Health Action Plan to achieve their health goals.

Prospective Healthy Howard Access Plan members will use a new web-based enrollment system (Health-e-Link) to register. Health-e-Link allows citizens to enroll for multiple programs using only one electronic application and "Certified Application Assistors" are on-hand to help clients enroll.

To monitor the economic viability of the plan and its sustainability, evaluators from Johns Hopkins, Harvard and University of Maryland will oversee the Plan.

Enrollment will take place over the next several months. Clinical and coaching services will begin January 1, 2009.

To learn more about the Healthy Howard Access Plan, visit the Howard County Health Department website at www.hchealth.org.

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