

Expanding health care access

Due to the implementation of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA), more Oregonians can get health insurance and can access financial help to pay for it. Most people qualify for health insurance now, even if they've been denied in the past. No one can be denied coverage because of a pre-existing condition. We expect these changes will result in health care coverage for 95 percent of Oregonians.



Cover Oregon is a new online marketplace where Oregonians can compare and enroll in health insurance that fits their needs and budget.

Cover Oregon offers easy, one-stop shopping for health insurance from both private insurers and state programs. From October 2013 – March 2014, people can enroll at www.CoverOregon.com. Coverage starts Jan. 1, 2014. Notably, income eligibility for the Oregon Health Plan (OHP) will expand Jan. 1.

In 2014, most people will be required to have health coverage. Uninsured persons will be required to pay an annual fee of at least \$95 (this fee increases over time and increases based on income). In addition to the fee, uninsured people will continue to be responsible for 100 percent of the cost of their medical care.

Generally, uninsured persons must enroll in a health plan during an open enrollment period. However, enrollment is allowed outside of these

periods for 1) persons eligible for OHP and 2) persons who lose their insurance because of a qualifying major life event (e.g., losing a job, experiencing a change in family size). Persons who are ineligible for OHP and choose not to purchase health insurance (as required by law) will be unable to enroll in a health plan outside of an open enrollment period. In this scenario, a person must wait to enroll during the next open enrollment period (starting October 2014); this applies to uninsured people wanting treatment following an unexpected diagnosis, such as HIV.

ACA implementation is expected to improve the health of people at risk for and living with HIV and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs). Federal guidance requires most plans to cover the cost of certain preventive services. Covered services include HIV screening for people aged 15-65; targeted STI prevention counseling; targeted screening for chlamydia, gonorrhea and syphilis; vaccines for HPV and hepatitis A and B; and alcohol misuse screening and counseling (learn more at <http://bit.ly/prevCare>).

As of Jan. 1, 2014, more people living with HIV will qualify for CAREAssist (Oregon's AIDS Drug Assistance Program) as income eligibility will expand to 400 percent of the federal poverty level (e.g., a pre-tax monthly income of up to about \$3,830 for a single person).

Agencies are encouraged to discuss health insurance with all clients. Trained agencies available to help clients enroll include Cascade AIDS Project, HIV Alliance, Partnership Project and the Eastern Oregon Center for Independent Living. The Oregon HIV/STD Hotline (1-800-777-2437) or the Cover Oregon call center (1-855-268-3767) also can assist.

New Oregon HIV data available

Each year, the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) HIV Data and Analysis Program releases an “Epidemiologic Profile of HIV/AIDS in Oregon” (also known as the “Epi Profile”). The Epi Profile



provides data about HIV in Oregon, its impact by county and population, and its intersection with other infections.

The 2013 Epi Profile is available to view and download at <http://bit.ly/EpiProf13>. The OHA HIV Data and Analysis Program produces many additional reports and fact sheets that are updated regularly and available to the public at www.healthoregon.org/hivdata.

OHA welcomes new ideas for improving the way HIV data are shared on the OHA website. Please email your suggestions to us at prevention.info@state.or.us.

Upcoming events

A Benefit for The Living Room (a safe haven for LGBTQQ youth in Clackamas County)

Nov. 15, 6–7 p.m.

Darcelle XV Showplace in Portland

\$15 in advance or \$20 at the door

Visit <http://www.thelivingroomyouth.org/>.

Transgender Day of Remembrance

Nov. 20

Learn more at <http://www.transgenderdor.org>.

World AIDS Day

Dec. 1

Visit www.worldaidsdaynw.org to find or register an event.

Posters and cards

promoting World

AIDS Day are

available at Our

House. Contact

John Oules at

joules@ourhouseofportland.org.



12.1.13

Program reorganization

Change is in the wind. Doug Harger, STD Program Lead, will be retiring Dec. 31, 2013, after a long career with many contributions to public health. Starting Jan. 1, 2014, Ruth Helsley, HIV Prevention Manager, will oversee both the HIV Prevention and STD programs.



As both programs support sexual health and will share a manager, some functions

will become more integrated. However, the programs will not merge as they have different roles, priority populations, federal funding sources and reporting requirements.

Thus, OHA HIV/STD/TB Program leadership is developing a plan to reorganize positions and duties to optimize operations. This reorganization will consider a number of changes that already have occurred relating to program needs, priorities and federal funding.

The OHA HIV/STD/TB Program will continue to share information about its reorganization in future newsletters.