

NEWS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 11, 2015

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Assistance Available for Health Insurance Marketplace Applicants *Open Enrollment Period Runs November 1, 2015 through January 1, 2016*

GALVESTON COUNTY, Texas – As the Federal Health Insurance Marketplace’s next open enrollment period approaches, the certified application counselors at Coastal Health & Wellness stand ready to assist Galveston County residents apply for coverage.

For coverage starting in 2016, the open enrollment period is November 1, 2015 through January 1, 2016. Depending on income, individuals may qualify for assistance paying their monthly health care premiums. Applicants may also qualify for exemptions from paying a penalty on tax returns. For example, an individual with income under the income guidelines may be exempt from the tax penalty. However, people who do not enroll may face a tax penalty, which will increase every year.

“A great benefit of health care in the marketplace is that all essential health benefits are covered. This includes maternity care, mammograms, and other preventative care services,” said Candida Scott, Coastal Health & Wellness Outreach and Enrollment coordinator. “You cannot be denied health coverage for having a pre-existing condition such as diabetes, hypertension, or cancer.”

There is no open enrollment for individuals to apply for Medicaid, Children’s Health Insurance Program, or the Texas Woman’s Health Program. Individuals may qualify for a special enrollment period if they experience certain “qualifying life events” like marriage, relocation, income change, or birth, for example, at any time during the year.

Galveston County residents with questions about the Federal Health Insurance Marketplace are encouraged to call Coastal Health & Wellness’ certified application counselors at (409) 978-4225 or visit the clinic at 9850-C Emmett F. Lowry Expressway in Texas City.

About the Galveston County Health District

The Galveston County Health District (GCHD) is a distinct governmental entity and is unique as it oversees two major operations under two separate and distinct policy-making boards: (1) the United Board of Health appointed by Galveston County and cities to set policy for health department services and (2) the Coastal Health & Wellness Governing Board, on which the majority of members are consumers who set policy for the FQHC operations in accordance with federal requirements. Additionally, the district oversees services under three distinct tax ID’s: Galveston County Health District, which funds services related to public health, animal control, financial screening for the Galveston County indigent healthcare program, and air and water monitoring services. Coastal Health & Wellness, which provides medical, dental and mental health counseling services to Galveston County residents, and Galveston Area Ambulance Authority which provides emergency and non-emergency ambulance services to contracted agencies within Galveston County. Learn more about GCHD at www.GCHD.org.

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