



Robert P. Astorino, Westchester County Executive

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## NEWS RELEASE

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### **COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT ANNOUNCES AFFORDABLE CARE ACT ASSISTANCE Certified Navigators Guide Residents through the Healthcare Marketplace**

Starting Tuesday, residents who are uninsured or self-insured can enroll in a new health insurance plan through the NY State of Health Marketplace. Open enrollment starts Oct. 1 and continues through March 31, 2014. For coverage to begin January 1, applications must be in by Dec. 15.

This new health insurance marketplace opens October 1 as a result of the Affordable Care Act of 2010.

To help residents and small business owners understand and access this new system, the Westchester County Health Department will have seven “navigators” available at 25 locations throughout the county starting Tuesday. Certified by the state to provide confidential service, these navigators will help people evaluate their eligibility, inform them of available subsidies, compare options and enroll in the health insurance plan that best suits them. Navigators also will be able to help families and individuals enroll year-round in Medicaid and Child Health Plus, a state public health plan for children. Navigator services will be provided at no cost.

“Our goal is to help guide residents through the process so they can gain access to a health insurance plan that fits their budget and provides for a high standard of care,” said Westchester County Health Commissioner Sherlita Amler, MD.

Navigators will be available to meet during a set schedule of walk-in or by-appointment hours at libraries and government and healthcare agency offices, as well as by appointment at other locations. Evening and weekend hours are available, along with weekdays, so an appointment should be accessible to anyone who needs one. Help is available in Spanish and English. For a map, with a listing and directions to all locations, go to [www.westchestergov.com/health](http://www.westchestergov.com/health).

Five of the seven navigators are health department employees with more than a decade of experience in providing health insurance enrollment assistance. The remaining two are employed by The Business of Your Business, a Westchester-based consulting firm with small business outreach expertise. The Navigators are

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funded by a \$2 million five-year grant from the New York State Department of Health.

The Navigators will help residents sort through the information available in the NY State of Health online marketplace, which offers New Yorkers a gateway to affordable healthcare. Information about the health plans is available at [www.nystateofhealth.ny.gov](http://www.nystateofhealth.ny.gov) or by calling 1-855-355-5777. Starting Oct. 1, this line will be open Mondays through Fridays from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. and on Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Residents also can enroll online on their own through this portal, or can do so with the help of a navigator. Employers can begin enrolling through the Small Business Health Options Program, the health insurance marketplace for small businesses, on Tuesday and can continue to enroll year round.

Health department staffers also are available to answer questions. You can email the navigators at [hnav@westchestergov.com](mailto:hnav@westchestergov.com) or call 914-813-5192.

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