

MEDIA RELEASE

HEALTH EXCHANGE BOARD VOTES TO TAKE NEXT STEPS TO STRENGTHEN HEALTH INSURANCE MARKET

BALTIMORE (APRIL 16, 2018) – The board of trustees of the Maryland Health Benefit Exchange (MHBE), which operates Maryland Health Connection, voted today to formally proceed with a federal application for a reinsurance program that Governor Larry Hogan and the state legislature have approved to hold down consumer costs and bring greater certainty to Maryland’s individual market for health insurance for 2019 and 2020.

The board’s vote establishes parameters for a reinsurance program. It also authorizes MHBE to apply to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to request federal approval for an “innovation waiver” to create the program under Section 1332 of the Affordable Care Act.

States are required to post State Innovation Waiver Applications for public comment for a minimum of 30 days. MHBE will host a public call at 2 p.m. Friday, April 20, to explain the application process, including details on upcoming public hearings. The teleconference can be accessed by calling 833-781-3960. The meeting number is 4996096.

Public comments can also be emailed to mhbe.publiccomments@maryland.gov. MHBE has posted additional details at MarylandHBE.com.

The board released the following statement following its vote:

“Maryland has long been recognized as a national leader in health care and health care delivery. Through diligent work and cooperation, the state has reduced the number of Marylanders who lack health insurance to 6 percent of the population, an all-time low. This success is demonstrated in our individual market in which 250,000 Marylanders participate both on and off the Maryland Health Connection marketplace. While that has been a momentous achievement, premiums on the Maryland individual market have become unaffordable for a significant number of residents.

“The board understands that without decisive action, the mission to provide affordable health coverage to all Marylanders would be hindered. It strongly supports the recent action by Governor Larry Hogan and the Maryland General Assembly to slow rate increases in the individual market.

“The board believes that the combination of state resources and federal government pass-through savings through the waiver would help stabilize premiums on the individual market for at least the next two years. We look forward to the continuing cooperation between all levels of government as we seek to address the issues affecting Marylanders in the health insurance market.”

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About the Maryland Health Benefit Exchange: The Maryland Health Benefit Exchange, a public corporation and independent unit of state government, administers Maryland Health Connection. Including more than 1 million people enrolled in Medicaid, MHBE enrolls one of every six Marylanders in health coverage.

About Maryland Health Connection: Maryland Health Connection is the state's official health insurance marketplace for individuals and families to compare and enroll in health insurance. It is the only place where Marylanders can access tax credits to make coverage more affordable. People who have lost coverage and meet criteria for a special enrollment can also enroll throughout the year at MarylandHealthConnection.gov or on the Enroll MHC mobile app.

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