

## [Washington Health Benefit Exchange Selects CHOICE Regional Health Network for Customer Support Program](#)

### Local News

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**Olympia, Wash. &ndash;** The Washington Health Benefit Exchange today announced the selection of CHOICE Regional Health Network to provide in-person assistance as part of the Washington Healthplanfinder Customer Support Program. *Washington Healthplanfinder* is a new way for people to find, compare and enroll in health insurance in Washington starting Oct., 1, 2013. CHOICE is one of ten organizations, including public health agencies, coalitions, regional health networks, and other community organizations that were chosen statewide to help residents enroll in a qualified health plan starting Oct. 1, 2013 for coverage that takes effect on Jan. 1, 2014. CHOICE will serve seven counties, including Clallam, Jefferson, Grays Harbor, Lewis, Mason, Pacific and Thurston. Lead organizations will share in the close to \$6 million in grants funds being provided by the Exchange. &ldquo;We are excited to partner with such knowledgeable and trusted organizations that are experts at reaching people in their communities,&rdquo; said Richard Onizuka, Ph.D, CEO of the Washington Health Benefit Exchange. &ldquo;Their work will help connect hundreds of thousands of people with quality health coverage &ndash; many for the first time.&rdquo; CHOICE will provide residents with impartial information to help them determine which health insurance option best fit their needs. These efforts may take place through in-person meetings, online communications and over the phone. CHOICE will also build and oversee a network of partners in the Central Western Washington area to serve both urban and rural populations.

&ldquo;CHOICE is genuinely excited to have the opportunity to serve as the lead organization for the seven-county region in Central Western Washington,&rdquo; said Winfried Danke, CHOICE&rsquo;s Executive Director. &ldquo;For many years now, uninsured adults in our region have had little options for affordable health care coverage. The Health Benefits Exchange paves the way for individuals to access much needed health care and CHOICE is pleased to be a part of that exciting mission.&rdquo; To ensure statewide consistency, the Washington Health Benefit Exchange will lead curriculum and training materials development to effectively train CHOICE and other lead organizations. These organizations will then be responsible for training their partner networks. All organizations will need to pass a certification exam before working with consumers. CHOICE received a total of \$558,000 from the Washington Health Benefit Exchange to build and oversee a robust in-person assistance program in the seven counties they will be serving. The Exchange has received a total of \$6 million from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to develop the program in all areas of the state. &ldquo;The Exchange is fortunate to partner with community organizations who are eager to help make health care coverage a reality for the individuals and families they serve. These organizations are the best way to reach people who are not likely to use a website or call center, but who need one-on-one assistance to help them learn about their options and enroll in coverage,&rdquo; said Kelly Boston, Navigator Manager for the Washington Health Benefit Exchange. *Washington Healthplanfinder* will allow individuals, families and small businesses to make apples-to-apples comparisons of health insurance plans, determine if they are eligible for low-cost or free options, and choose the plan that fits their needs and their budget. In addition to the lead organizations and their networks, residents will also be able to access customer support through

the Washington Healthplanfinder Call Center or their insurance broker. More information about *Washington Healthplanfinder* and the Washington Health Benefit Exchange is available at [www.wahbexchange.org](http://www.wahbexchange.org).

**About CHOICE Regional Health Network** CHOICE Regional Health Network's mission is to improve community health in Central Western Washington through collective planning and action of health care leaders. CHOICE, founded in 1995, is a nonprofit collaborative of member organizations. CHOICE has partnered for years with the region's medical providers, local governments and a number of community-based organizations on a wide range of community health improvement projects. CHOICE believes that through collaboration, the effectiveness and efficiency of any single organization is greatly increased. CHOICE's region encompasses Grays Harbor, Lewis, Mason, Pacific, and Thurston counties. As Lead Organization for the Health Benefit Exchange, they will also serve Clallam, Jefferson counties to implement the Affordable Care Act and provide services to uninsured individuals in their communities.

**About the Washington Health Benefit Exchange** The Washington Health Benefit Exchange is a public-private partnership established in accordance with the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010 (ACA) with the goal to redefine people's experience with health care through the creation of a new health insurance marketplace for individuals and small businesses. The Exchange is separate from the state and governed by an independent 11-member board appointed by Gov. Chris Gregoire in December 2011.

**About Washington Healthplanfinder** *Washington Healthplanfinder* will be a new online marketplace for individuals, families and small businesses in Washington to compare and enroll in health insurance coverage and gain access to tax credits, reduced cost sharing and public programs such as Medicaid. *Washington Healthplanfinder* will begin enrolling consumers on Oct. 1, 2013, for health insurance coverage beginning on Jan. 1, 2014.

**CHOICE Regional Health Network In-Person Assistance Partners** *Listed in alphabetical order* Capital Medical Center Cowlitz Family Health Center - North Beach Family Support Center of South Sound Forks Community Hospital GHB Insurance Grays Harbor Community Hospital Grays Harbor County Public Health and Social Services Department Jefferson County Public Health Jefferson Healthcare Lewis County Public Health and Social Services Lewis County Shelter Program Lewis-Mason-Thurston Area Agency on Aging Mason County Public Health Mason General Hospital & Family of Clinics Mason Matters Morton General Hospital Olympic Area Agency on Aging Pacific County Public Health and Human Services Department Providence Centralia Hospital Providence St. Peter Hospital SafePlace Sea Mar Community Health Centers Summit Pacific Medical Center The Olympia Free Clinic Thurston County Chamber of Commerce Thurston County Food Bank Thurston County Public Health and Social Services Valley View Health Center Volunteers in Medicine of the Olympics Willapa Harbor Hospital