



MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release: December 5, 2018

Media contact: Andria Y. Carter, Work: 513-585-9862, Cell: 513-374-8256,
andria.carter@thehealthgap.org

Health Gap Urges Individuals Needing Health Insurance to Take Advantage of Either Medicare or the ACA Open Enrollment

CINCINNATI – The Center for Closing the Health Gap is urging individuals or families in need of health insurance to take advantage of the open enrollment periods for the Affordable Care Act (ACA) or Medicare for coverage in 2019. The ACA enrollment period ends December 15, 2018 while Medicare’s enrollment period ends on December 7, 2018.

In Ohio, individuals can purchase health insurance from the federally operated health insurance exchange. Individuals buying health insurance during the enrollment period will see their coverage begin on January 1, 2019. In Cincinnati, consumers can visit the Free Store FoodBank and/or the Universal Health Care Action Network (UHCAN) to obtain information about health coverage.

“We want everyone, particularly our children and families, to sign up for healthcare through the marketplace – and the deadline is next week. Enrollment is up, but more people are eligible this year so there are a lot of people who could get quality healthcare but might miss the deadline. We can’t let that happen, so we are asking all of our partners, including our friends in the media, to raise awareness on the looming deadline, and how to sign up for healthcare,” said Cincinnati Council Member Greg Landsman

Health Commissioner Melba Moore also urges Cincinnati consumers in need of health insurance to take advantage of the enrollment period. Cincinnati residents can schedule an appointment at any of the City

of Cincinnati Health Centers to learn more about the health insurance plans available on the health insurance exchange.

According to the Cincinnati Medical Association, the ACA has made it easier for individuals to obtain health insurance, and eliminated the insurance companies' ability to implement price discrimination because of age or gender. It has also allowed for adult children under the age of 25 to be covered by their parents insurance.

The CMA also noted another major provision of the ACA is the Medicaid expansion provision chosen by 27 states. The uninsured rates in small towns and rural areas of these states dropped from 35% to 16% compared to a decline from 38% to 32% in the non-expansion states. Ohio accepted Medicaid expansion and experienced a decline in its low-income insured rate from 35% to 18%. Across the country, when Medicaid expansion has been implemented, the uninsured rates drop and the gap between the higher uninsured rates in the rural areas compared to the urban areas has narrowed.

Jill Froment, Director of Ohio Department of Insurance, noted at the beginning of the Medicare enrollment period, it is an once-a-year opportunity for Ohioans already enrolled in Medicare to compare plans and find one that fits their needs at a price they can afford. "Medicare health and prescription drug cost sharing can vary between plans for the same drug or service, so it is important to look at your options each year and make changes if necessary.

To obtain more information about the Affordable Care Act Open Enrollment or Medicare plans contact the federal exchange in Ohio by visiting www.healthcare.gov or by calling 1-800-318-2596. In Cincinnati, contact the Free Store FoodBank at 513-545-8897 or Universal Health Care Action Network (UHCAN) at 513-310-0715; or schedule an appointment at one of the City Health Centers at 513-564-CARE (2273).

About the Center for Closing the Health Gap in Greater Cincinnati

The Center for Closing the Health Gap is Cincinnati's only grassroots organization that promotes awareness about health disparities through education, training, advocacy and outreach activities for organizations and individuals in Greater Cincinnati. The Center maximizes collaborative opportunities by working with organizations, associations, health institutions and other stakeholders to promote health and disease prevention. The Center's goal is to improve the health status of the African American, Latino and Appalachian populations.