Press Release

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Mills Administration Launches Campaign to Remind Maine People to Explore Their Health Coverage Options in the Face of COVID-19

Those who have lost a job or income can visit CoverME.gov to learn more and apply

AUGUSTA- The Maine Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) today launched a statewide campaign to promote awareness of affordable health insurance options, particularly for people whose employment or income has been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

DHHS is launching a special outreach campaign to remind Maine people about CoverME.gov, a resource for finding affordable health insurance options, in response to the changing economic circumstances caused by the pandemic. Maine residents who have recently lost a job or income may also lose their health insurance provided through their employer or now be struggling to afford their monthly insurance premium. Many of these individuals may qualify for a free or low-cost plan through MaineCare (Maine Medicaid) or the federal marketplace.

The statewide campaign will include digital, social media, and television advertisements, with ads beginning this week and continuing through June.

Maine DHHS is also collaborating with the Maine Department of Labor to inform those applying for unemployment insurance that they may be eligible for affordable health insurance options.

"From expanding Medicaid early on to signing into law the *Made for Maine Health Coverage Act*, my Administration has always fought to expand access to affordable health care for Maine people," **said Governor Janet Mills**. "COVID-19 further underscores the importance of having health insurance. I urge Maine people, particularly those who may have lost income or health insurance as a result of the pandemic, to visit CoverME.gov to find options to protect their health and help them care for their families."

"Maine people may qualify for affordable health coverage options, especially those who have lost jobs or income because of the COVID-19 pandemic," **said DHHS Commissioner Jeanne Lambrew.** "We urge Maine people to visit CoverME.gov to understand their options and sign up. Today more than ever, coverage is critical to ensuring access to needed health care."

Maine people can learn more at **CoverME.gov** or call Consumers for Affordable Health Care at **1-800-965-7476** for free, local help.

Most Maine people are eligible for insurance through MaineCare if their annual income is less than $17,609 for a single person or $36,156 for a family of four. Maine people with incomes above the MaineCare threshold but less than $51,040 for a single person or less than $103,000 for a family of four may be eligible for lower monthly premiums on HealthCare.gov.

Eligible Maine people may enroll in MaineCare at any time of year. More than 53,000 people are now enrolled through the expansion of MaineCare under Governor Mills - an increase of over 10 percent since April 1, 2020.

To apply through HealthCare.gov, individuals currently must qualify for a Special Enrollment Period. Losing health insurance through a job should allow individuals to sign up for private insurance if they apply within 60 days. Governor Mills recently joined a coalition of Governors from 11 other states in asking the Trump Administration to take swift action to allow for a broader Special Enrollment Period to ease access to critical health care in the face of COVID-19.

Additionally, Maine people who already have coverage through the Marketplace but expect to earn less in 2020 should update their income estimate, since they may qualify for more financial help to afford their plan or for MaineCare.

The statewide campaign announced today builds on the Mills Administration's ongoing work to reduce Maine's uninsured rate and ensure that all eligible Maine people enroll in coverage. DHHS will conduct another advertising campaign in the fall to coincide with the HealthCare.gov open enrollment period.

Governor Mills declared an insurance emergency on March 12, 2020 to improve access to care and require private health insurance plans to cover costs related to coronavirus testing. The Superintendent of Insurance, Eric Cioppa, has ordered that private, fully insured plans pay the full costs of COVID-19 testing and issued an order deferring premium deadlines to assist consumers in maintaining health coverage. MaineCare covers the costs of COVID-19 testing and has increased access to care by waiving all copays for prescriptions, office visits, emergency department visits, radiology and lab services and allowing early refills of prescriptions, among other measures.

The Mills Administration has taken additional steps to bolster the health care workforce, expand telehealth services, and spearhead recent legislation to improve private health insurance for Maine people and small businesses.