

HOSTING PARTNER INVITATION

Patient Advocacy & Affordable Care Act and *Smart Choice* Webinars

Backdrop.

The Consumer Protection & Affordable Care Act (Affordable Care Act) was signed into law in March, 2010. Under the Affordable Care Act, citizens must now purchase health insurance or pay a "penalty income tax". Although much was happening behind the scenes over the past three years, consumers didn't seem to be directly affected...until now.



Individuals who are eligible to enroll in a Qualified Health Plan can now enroll in a plan through the "Marketplace" established by the Affordable Care Act. For 2014, the Marketplace Open Enrollment Period is October 1, 2013-March 31, 2014.

Research indicates that Americans are confused and uninformed regarding health insurance choices and ill-equipped to effectively evaluate their options to make the best choices for themselves and their family. This challenge certainly holds true for Michigan residents.

Solution.

In response to this need, the Cooperative Extension, Committee on Organization and Policy National Task Force on Health, has made health insurance literacy a strategic initiative nationally. The Cooperative Extension in Michigan – Michigan State University Extension (MSUE) – is adopting and implementing the non-commercial *Smart Choice Health Insurance*® consumer education program (Smart Choice). MSUE educators will use the Smart Choice curriculum to help consumers across Michigan become better able to navigate the health insurance landscape in general as well as how it relates to the Affordable Care Act Marketplace, making them more confident to make a choice that's best for their family's health and financial needs, wants and resources.

Designed to reduce confusion and increase capability and confidence among consumers making health insurance plan choices, Smart Choice content is applicable for current health insurance consumers and those who are newly-eligible through the Affordable Care Act. MSUE has responded to this important and timely teachable moment by having select MSUE educators trained and certified to present the Smart Choice curriculum for the benefit of Michigan consumers, beginning November 4, 2013.

Opportunity.

Given limited resources of time and personnel, the urgency of the need, and the desire to maximize the reach and availability of this important health insurance information, MSUE will initially deliver the Smart Choice curriculum by utilizing distance learning technology. MSUE invites your organization to become a hosting partner and to simulcast one or more Smart Choice webinars for the benefit of your patrons, members, or personnel.

To accommodate the diverse scheduling needs of hosting sites across the state, MSUE is delivering the 90-minute Smart Choice webinar 3 times every Monday, starting on November 4, at the following times: 9-11am, 3-5pm and 6-8pm. To reserve the webinar date(s) and time(s) that best serves the needs of your organization and constituents, email your request to Brenda Long at Healthinsurance@anr.msu.edu



MSU is an affirmative-action, equal-opportunity employer. Michigan State University Extension programs and materials are open to all without regard to race, color, national origin, gender, gender identity, religion, age, height, weight, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, marital status, family status or veteran status.