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**MSU Extension helps Michigan residents take control of their health insurance choices**

EAST LANSING, Mich. – More Michigan consumers than ever are faced with having to make difficult health insurances choices – many for the first time. Through a series of free, unbiased educational programs, Michigan State University Extension hopes to help people make smart health insurance decisions for themselves and their families.

To help people understand the confusing and complex health insurance landscape, MSU Extension is hosting a series of weekly “Smart Choice” educational webinars and launching a new website to explain changes in the insurance landscape. The classes are free and open to the public. A current list of upcoming webinars can be found at [aca.msue.msu.edu](http://aca.msue.msu.edu), which are held every Monday from 3 to 5 p.m. and from 6 to 8 p.m. through March 31.

Brenda Long, an MSU Extension educator, is spearheading the effort.

“We aren’t going to push people to any particular plan,” she explained. “Our goal is to help people understand this complex issue and arm them with the information they need to make their own decisions. This is one of the most important decisions people make, and they will be dealing with concepts they are often unfamiliar with.”

Long and her colleagues will help participants analyze their insurance needs, learn important terms and concepts, compare health insurance plans and figure out what fits into their budgets. The aim is to help participants become confident in taking the next steps in signing up for insurance, either through a private insurance broker or directly through the federal Health Insurance Marketplace.

“Our Smart Choice program gives people the necessary information to successfully get the answers and coverage they need, either through a local certified application counselor or the federal healthcare.gov site,” Long said.

Organizations that provide health or community assistance, or employers looking to provide education for their employees can also contact MSU Extension directly at [healthinsurance@anr.msu.edu](mailto:healthinsurance@anr.msu.edu) and request information about setting up an in-person training session.

For more information about the Affordable Care Act, the Health Insurance Marketplace, and how both affect the people, families and businesses in Michigan, visit [aca.msue.msu.edu](http://aca.msue.msu.edu).

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