

Harkin Announces Nearly \$600,000 to Help Iowans Sign Up for Quality, Affordable Health Insurance

Written by Sen. Tom Harkin
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Navigators Will Educate Iowans About Benefits Available to them Under the Affordable Care Act and How to Sign up for Health Insurance; Up to 150,000 Iowans Projected to Participate in New Marketplace

WASHINGTON, D.C.—U.S. Senator Tom Harkin (D-IA) today announced that three Iowa organizations will receive funding totaling nearly \$600,000 to help Iowans sign up for quality, affordable health insurance through the new health insurance marketplace opening in the state on October 1st of this year. These organizations—Genesis Health System, Visiting Nurse Services of Iowa, and Planned Parenthood of the Heartland—will train ‘navigators,’ who will serve as person resources for unbiased information to consumers about the health insurance marketplace and the benefits available to them under the *Affordable Care Act* (ACA).

“I am pleased to see that these Iowa organizations will receive the necessary resources to train health insurance navigators—who will in turn help the roughly 150,000 Iowans projected to enroll in quality, affordable coverage through our state’s health insurance marketplace,” Harkin said. “Navigators will play a critical role in educating Iowans about how to select and enroll in a plan that is best for them and their families. The insurance marketplace is a central part of the *Affordable Care Act’s* historic coverage expansion, providing access to coverage to individuals and small businesses currently locked out of the market.”

As Chairman of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee, Harkin played a pivotal role in the passage of the ACA. State-based insurance marketplaces, including Iowa’s, will allow consumers to shop for, compare, and enroll in private health plans. Consumers will be able to learn if they are eligible for tax credits and cost-sharing reductions, or other health care programs like the Children’s Health Insurance Program. Small employers will be eligible to receive tax credits for coverage purchased for employees through the marketplaces. These competitive marketplaces make purchasing health insurance easier and

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more understandable and offer consumers and small businesses increased competition and choice.

A list of the Iowa organizations receiving Navigator funding, along with the funding totals, is below. This information is provided by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Genesis Health System

Anticipated grant amount: \$128,430

Genesis Health System will implement a navigator program through the Genesis Visiting Nurses Association (GVNA). Genesis plans to use existing relationships to aid residents and small business in accessing new sources of coverage.

Visiting Nurse Services of Iowa

Anticipated grant amount: \$257,142

The Visiting Nurse Services of Iowa will implement a navigator program serving 38 of Iowa's 99 counties, home to approximately half of the uninsured in Iowa. The Visiting Nurse Services will provide navigator services through public awareness, education and assistance in enrolling individuals in qualified health plans. They also will partner with other organizations with considerable expertise in eligibility, enrollment, and knowledge of other health programs such as Medicaid and CHIP.

Planned Parenthood of the Heartland

Anticipated grant amount: \$214,427

Planned Parenthood of the Heartland (PPHeartland) is a private, non-profit community-based health care agency operating in Arkansas, Iowa, Nebraska and Oklahoma. In Iowa, PPHeartland plans to have Navigators cover 61 counties and will strategically base Navigators in regions across Iowa.

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