

 WASHINGTON STATE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES 21st LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT		
	REPRESENTATIVE MARKO LIAS	
		REPRESENTATIVE MARY HELEN ROBERTS
Olympia Office: 414 John L. O'Brien Building PO Box 40600 Olympia, WA 98504-0600 (360) 786-7834 District Office: 21818 66th Ave. W. Ste 14 Mountlake Terrace, WA 98043 425-678-8676	Toll-free Hotline: 1-800-562-6000 1-800-635-9993 (TTY) E-mail Rep. Marko Liias E-mail Rep. Mary Helen Roberts	Olympia Office: 420 John L. O'Brien Building PO Box 40600 Olympia, WA 98504-0600 (360) 786-7950 District Office: 610 5th Ave. S. Ste F Edmonds, WA 98020 425-245-8382

October, 2013

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

October is health care month in Washington. Since October 1, the Affordable Care Act has opened up a new health insurance market across the country and in our state. This opening coincides with a number of new policies put in place this year during the legislative session. These are changes that will make health care more accessible and affordable for Washingtonians, but in order to take advantage of them, you have to know how they work!

This newsletter is a primer on the changes in Washington's health care market, but to ensure that you and your neighbors are prepared we would like to invite you to join us on October 22 for our Health Care Town Hall. This event will provide a forum for you to learn all about the new policies and programs that are starting this October.

We will be joined by Representative Eileen Cody, Chair of the House Health Care and Wellness Committee, as well as Gary Goldbaum from the Snohomish Health District. Together, we look forward to answering your questions and listening to your feedback about how these policies have affected you and your family. Please see the sidebar for more information.

HEALTH CARE TOWN HALL

Who: Representatives Marko Liias, Mary Helen Roberts and Eileen Cody, Snohomish Health District Director Gary Goldbaum

When: October 22, 6:00 p.m.

Where:

Swedish Edmonds Campus
 21601 76th Ave. W.
 Auditorium A, B, C
 Edmonds, WA

Why: To learn about the new health care market in Washington State.



If you can't make it, that's okay – you can contact our offices or send us an email. Thank you for giving us the opportunity to serve you and we look forward to hearing from you!



Representative Marko Liias



Representative Mary Helen Roberts

KEY ISSUES:

This session the Legislature took major steps to improve the quality, accessibility, and affordability of health care in Washington State. These changes will ensure that more people will be covered, costs for most will be lower and more comprehensive benefits will be provided. Thousands of Washingtonians will no longer have to fear the costs of going to a doctor because they don't have insurance to cover their medical bills.

Here are some the positive impacts that health care reform will have in the 21st legislative district and around the state:

Improving Access to Healthcare through Medicaid Expansion

One of the most substantive decisions the Legislature made this past session was giving bipartisan support to Medicaid Expansion. This decision leverages federal dollars to expand the eligibility of the program to those earning 138 percent of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL), or about \$32,500 for a family of four. This will make healthcare accessible and affordable for more than 250,000 individuals statewide. It also fully funds adult dental programs that provide low-income families with access to dental care. Expanding Medicaid will improve health and quality of life for citizens across the state.

Saving Money on Healthcare Costs

Medicaid expansion is also a victory for taxpayers – even those of us that already have health insurance. The Medicaid expansion allows us to save \$265 million over the next two years by lightening the load of our state health program, the Basic Health Plan. We also save money by encouraging preventive care and reducing emergency room treatments, which often come at the expense of hospitals and taxpayers when there is no insurance to cover the bill. We will be able to invest in our kids, infrastructure, and job creation.

A New Healthcare Exchange to Provide Greater Service and Choice

For those who lack medical insurance and still won't be covered under the new Medicaid standards, the Legislature has established a health benefits exchange where providers will compete to provide low-cost insurance under the Affordable Care Act. The exchange is an online marketplace that will make it easier for people who are looking for coverage to shop for plans, compare prices, and determine the best insurance provider for their needs. It will also help protect consumers by establishing minimum standards for services covered and quality of care. For more information on the new health care market, see the following page:

HOW TO GET COVERED

The New Health Care Market

The exchange, called the Washington Healthplanfinder, is an online marketplace for individuals, families and small businesses in Washington to compare and enroll in health insurance coverage and gain

access to tax credits, reduced cost sharing and public programs such as Medicaid. Since October 1st, Healthplanfinder has been helping Washington families find health insurance that fits their budget and meets their needs, with less hassle.

Enrollment is open now at wahealthplanfinder.org

Wahealthplanfinder.org is your best source of information about this new health care exchange. You can read information that pertains to you, check out the cost calculator, and learn more as you get ready to apply and enroll. You and your family can explore every qualified health plan in your area, and fill out an application when you're ready.

No matter where you live, you may buy insurance from private health plans that cover a comprehensive set of benefits, including doctor visits, hospital stays, preventive care, and prescriptions. Any plan in the exchange must treat you fairly; they can't deny you coverage because of a pre-existing condition. With a single application, you can also see if you qualify for Medicaid or the Children's Health Insurance Program, or savings you can use right away to lower your health insurance premiums.

Once you've decided on a plan, you don't need to go anywhere else. Starting in October, you'll be able to enroll in the exchange directly for coverage that begins as soon as January 1, 2014.

Want help or need more information?

The Washington Healthplanfinder toll-free Customer Support Center is available for individuals to get their questions answered about how Washington Healthplanfinder works, what types of health coverage will be offered, how to access financial help and what you need to know about the enrollment process.

Representatives will be on the line weekdays from 7:30 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. by phone at 1-855-WAFINDER (1-855-923-4633) or by emailing customersupport@wahbexchange.org. Help will be available in up to 175 languages.