



Live 24-Hour Help Line Expanded to Help Uninsured Georgia Residents Obtain Health Coverage

Help Line, Free Brochure Detailing Health Care Options Are Part of Campaign to Reduce Georgia's 1.4 Million With No Health Insurance

SAN JOSE, Calif., Dec. 14 -- After discovering that nearly one-third of Georgia's uninsured are eligible for government health insurance but aren't enrolled, the Foundation for Health Coverage Education (FHCE) has expanded its Uninsured Help Line (800-234-1317) and other services to offer Georgia residents information about eligibility and facilitate access to available coverage. It is also running public service announcements on local radio stations as part of its informational campaign in Georgia.

"Research shows that many Georgians are eligible for health care programs, but they're either unaware of them or need help signing up," said Philip Lebherz, founder of FHCE. "This service provides live counselors to help simplify the eligibility and enrollment process in order to help more people obtain the coverage they need."

A closer look at the 1,376,000 Georgians without health insurance, as reported by the Census Bureau, reveals that:

- * 409,000 are eligible for public insurance programs.
- * 442,000 earn \$50,000 or more annually and prefer to pay as they go or think insurance is too costly.
- * 215,000 are temporarily uninsured because of transitions in employment.
- * 310,000 make too much money to qualify for public programs but not enough to afford private health insurance at present.

The U.S. Uninsured Help Line provides live one-on-one assistance and is staffed 24/7 with friendly information specialists and interpreters who speak multiple languages. They provide basic screening for both public and private health insurance, help callers identify their potential options and connect them to health coverage representatives. The call center can refer the consumer directly to the appropriate state-sponsored program according to various medical conditions and guide the caller to obtain appropriate health coverage.

"So many public health care programs and government mandates have been created by well-meaning legislators to help those in need, yet there is little awareness of this progress," said Mr. Lebherz. "The eligibility and enrollment process can be confusing. It is our goal to make anyone living in Georgia and other states aware of his or her options and show them how to sign up."

The Help Line was originally launched in April 2004 to serve California residents. After more than a year in existence, it received more than 9,000 calls from residents seeking health insurance assistance. The foundation's umbrella "Coverage for All" campaign is now targeting all 50 states. Expansion to Georgia will be succeeded by the availability of the Help Line and other FHCE information services in 15 additional states in various sections of the country over the next few months.

For more information about FHCE and the "Coverage For All" campaign, contact the help line at 800-234-1317 or visit the FHCE Web site at www.coverageforall.org