



October 15, 2013

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Dear ,

**Shopping for Health Care Underway**

The Marketplace for the Affordable Care Act (ACA or Obamacare) opened for business on October 1<sup>st</sup> unimpeded by the federal government shut down that is still in place as we go to print. In the first week there were over 8 million visits to the [federal exchange website](#) as individuals across the country shopped for needed health care. The number of visits exceeded the visits to Southwest Airlines according to Herb Schulz, Region IX HHS Administrator, who indicated the airline usually gets about 6 million hits in one month, not one week.

Yes indeed, reports of computer glitches have filled the air on radio or TV and heavily reported in newspapers and blogs. Problems with slow response time have plagued the system in these initial days. There have been some successes, however; people are actually getting online and enrolling in a health insurance plan for January 1<sup>st</sup>. The state-operated



Health Insurance Exchanges/Marketplaces are getting better reports than the federal Exchange/Marketplace. The federal web-managers are committed to work through the glitches and smooth out the transition. Arizona is served by the federal Exchange or Marketplace.

Four Arizona based agencies are serving as Navigators for the Marketplace, and there are many locations where individuals can receive assistance. The Arizona agencies are: 1) the Greater Phoenix Urban League, Inc., with sites in Phoenix and Tucson; 2) Arizona Association of Community Health Centers, with assistance sites at many of the community health centers statewide, and in partnership with other agencies in metropolitan Phoenix and Tucson; 3) Arizona Board of Regents, University of

Arizona, serving Asian-American and Pacific Islander uninsured in Pima County and Southern Arizona; and 4) Campesinos Sin Fronteras, Inc., serving farmworkers and Hispanic families in Yuma County.

Due to the complexity of the program, many individuals will find the FAQs developed by Kaiser Family Foundation useful, [click here to look at it](#). A shorter version for a quick distinction between AHCCCS and the Marketplace is the screening tool posted at CoverAZ, [click here](#).

Happy shopping!

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### **Seeds Conference, October 22nd**

There is a gratifyingly full house for the upcoming Tuesday conference that will held at the Arizona Bridge to Independent Living (ABIL) at 5025 E. Washington St. in Phoenix. The session will start at 11:30 a.m., and runs to 3:30 p.m. Come early so you can enjoy a box lunch. Participants will be hearing from: Dr. David L. Shern, President & CEO of Mental Health America, about the national perspective of health care reform; Monica Coury, Assistant Director of Intergovernmental Relations for AHCCCS, on the planned restoration and expansion of AHCCCS; and Cory Nelson, Deputy Director for Behavioral Health at Department of Health Services, who will discuss the upcoming contract cycle for Greater Arizona and how integration and expansion will impact the process.

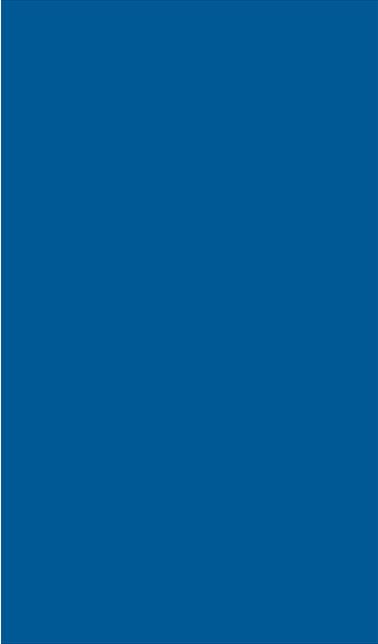
The afternoon will conclude with a panel discussion among key leaders of Regional Behavioral Health Authorities about how our community and the state agencies can support best practices, promote expansion efforts, and assure efficiencies in the system changes, while assuring that individuals served by the various programs are not harmed.

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### **Upcoming Community Events**

Events to put on your calendar.

- Maricopa County NAMI will host their annual walk on October 19th at the Arizona State Capitol. Put together a team and put on those walking shoes. [Walk details](#)
- Join the Arizona Foundation for Behavioral Health on Saturday, October 26th from 11 am to 2 pm at the Arizona Biltmore Hotel for the "Mystery Author's Lunch". For details contact [mabl@azfbh.org](mailto:mabl@azfbh.org).

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- Arizona Coalition to End Homelessness will host their 20th annual conference on October 29-30th at the Black Canyon Conference Center in Phoenix. Details can be found [here](#).

If you have events that you wish to promote, please send an e-mail and we'll share the information. We publish on a monthly basis.

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As MHA-AZ continues its revival, we invite your participation and sharing of information. Take a moment to share this newsletter with a friend or colleague. If he or she would like to receive regular updates, please have them e-mail me that request. We want to be inclusive. Thanks.

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