



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

October 26, 2017

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**NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF HEALTH ACCESS ASSISTERS LAUNCHES  
AHEAD OF Fall 2017 OPEN ENROLLMENT PERIOD**

*States come together across the nation to support consumers during  
Affordable Care Act open enrollment*

SACRAMENTO, CA—Today, the National Association of Health Access Assistors (NAHAA), a project of the California Coverage and Health Initiatives (CCHI), launched an association that unites all health access assistors and navigators on the eve of the Affordable Care Act Fall 2017 Open Enrollment Period (November 1 – December 15, 2017). The mission of NAHAA is to elevate, advance, and advocate for the thousands of health assistors across the country that help those who need health insurance and guidance in accessing health services in their communities. NAHAA’s mission is to promote and support the work of professional assistors as our members who help individuals, children, and families gain, use, and retain high quality health care and coverage.

“Because of the reductions in federal Navigator and marketing grants, it is now more critical than ever that consumers know health access assistors are ready and excited to help them sign up for, keep, and receive health care,” said Lisa Olson, CCHI Board Member and founding NAHAA Steering Committee Member. “I am thrilled to be a part of this transformative effort to leverage the incredible knowledge and commitment that health assistors across the nation have to positively impact the health care delivery system and consumers’ lives.”

Launching NAHAA is the culmination of a two-year long effort by consumer assistance experts to form a group to elevate and demonstrate the vital role of assistors as a critical component of the nation’s health care delivery system. CCHI, a statewide association in California with over 40 members that conduct enrollment, outreach, and navigation, and a network of 623 community partners, was asked to form NAHAA and to continue to nurture relationships across the nation’s assistors.

“We have a statewide assister association that has proven to be incredibly valuable to California, and when we were given the opportunity to support the same idea nationwide, we welcomed the opportunity,” says Mark Diel, CEO of both CCHI and NAHAA. “California is excited to be able to share best practices and to actively create relationships with and to learn from our assister, navigator, and volunteer colleagues across the country.”

NAHAA’s dynamic Steering Committee includes the following members representing health assister and health provider organizations:

Daniel Bouton, Community Council of Greater Dallas, Texas  
Mark Diel, CCHI and NAHAA, California  
Elba Gonzalez, Napa Valley CHI, California  
Deepak Madala, Enroll Virginia  
Jessie Menkens, Volunteer, Alaska  
Jeb Murphy, Volunteer, Maine  
Maggie Norris-Bent, Westside Family Health Services, Delaware  
Lisa Olson, Primary Care Association, Wisconsin  
Shelli Quenga, Palmetto Project, South Carolina  
Jodi Ray, University of South Florida  
Jennifer Simmons, Legal Aid, North Carolina

For Plan Year 2018, the annual Open Enrollment Period starts on November 1 and closes on December 15, 2017. Beyond the Open Enrollment Period, NAHAA's members will continue to support consumers in accessing health care so they can lead healthy and productive lives. You can meet with us in person at the Families USA's 2018 Health Action Conference January 25 – 27, 2018, in Washington, D.C.

NAHAA will provide essential and important services to its members, including: Advocacy and Visibility to Policymakers; Sharing Best Practices Among Members; Professional Development through Conferences, Statewide, and Regional Meetings, and Other Networking Opportunities; New Funding Models and Creating Funding Opportunities; and, Organizational Infrastructure Support and Capacity Building.

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*The National Association of Health Access Assistants, a project of the California Coverage and Health Initiatives, elevates, advances, and advocates for the Health Access Assistant profession. The goal is to promote and support the work of our members who help individuals, children, and families gain, use, and retain high quality health care and coverage. For more information visit [NAHAA.org](http://NAHAA.org) or contact Heather Bates at [hbates@nahaa.org](mailto:hbates@nahaa.org).*

*The California Coverage and Health Initiatives is a statewide association of over 40 members. CCHI is the largest network of enrollment/retention/navigation entities in California. Our members partner with 623 community-based agencies and have a 20+ year history of advocating for coverage for children and families and providing direct outreach, enrollment, and navigation services. For more information, visit [cchi4families.org](http://cchi4families.org) or contact Katie Heidorn at [kheidorn@cchi4families.org](mailto:kheidorn@cchi4families.org).*