



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Washington Healthplanfinder Adds In-Person Assistance Site in Whatcom County for 2018 Open Enrollment

Rice Insurance, LLC to offer help to Whatcom County residents signing up for coverage

OLYMPIA, Wash. -- The Washington Health Benefit Exchange today announced that **Rice Insurance, LLC** will operate a **Broker Affiliate Site** in **Bellingham** offering in-person assistance to *Washington Healthplanfinder* customers during the upcoming open enrollment period that takes place Nov. 1, 2017-Jan. 15, 2018.

The **Broker Affiliate Site**, located at **1400 Broadway, Bellingham, WA 98225**, will be staffed with trained navigators and brokers who will be available to personally guide **Bellingham** residents through the process of enrolling in health and dental coverage.

“Increased rates will impact customers very differently depending on where they live and their eligibility for subsidies,” said Pam MacEwan, CEO of the Washington Health Benefit Exchange. “It is especially important that all customers who have questions related to their insurance coverage, and would like 1:1 assistance, connect with a skilled broker or navigator who can help them understand their coverage options and enroll in coverage that best meets their needs.”

The selection of **Rice Insurance, LLC** to operate a **Broker Affiliate Site** in **Bellingham** was based on their prior experience with enrollment and assistance, as well as the remaining number of uninsured individuals residing in their service area. The location is required to host regular business hours and offer extended availability leading up to important enrollment deadlines. Residents are encouraged to schedule appointments with a navigator or broker in advance of the start of open enrollment on Nov. 1.

“We are looking forward to serving our community as one of the 13 affiliated offices in Washington state for the HealthPlanFinder. Our goal is to help our fellow members of the community navigate the Affordable Care Act market to find the best option for them, and there is no charge to work with us. Additionally, with the changes in the tax subsidies there will be many people who qualify for a plan with very low premiums or even free based on their incomes. Please reach out to Rice Insurance with any questions or to set up a time to meet with one of our advisors.” – Keith Wallace

In-person assistance sites strengthen an extensive network of existing navigators and brokers who are available to provide in-person help in communities throughout Washington state. Residents seeking in-person assistance from trained navigators and brokers may find that help in their area by clicking the “Customer Support” link on www.wahealthplanfinder.org.

Residents may also use the new [WAPlanfinder Mobile App](#) to locate nearby in-person assistance and find updated information about their coverage. Additional assistance is available over the phone by calling the *Washington Healthplanfinder* Customer Support Center at 1-855-923-4633.



Reminders: Enrollment is offered year-round to individuals and families through Washington Apple Health (Medicaid). Customers enrolled in Apple Health will receive a notice 60 days before the month they enrolled in or renewed their coverage last year. Small business owners have the option of enrolling year-round through Washington Healthplanfinder Business.

About Washington Healthplanfinder

Washington Healthplanfinder is an online marketplace for individuals and families 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. The next open enrollment period for Washington Healthplanfinder is set to begin on Nov. 1, 2017. The deadline for Jan. 1 coverage is Dec. 15.

About Washington Apple Health

In Washington, Medicaid is called [Washington Apple Health](#). Coverage is free and available year-round for those who qualify. Since the Affordable Care Act launched in October 2013, more people have access to preventive care, like cancer screenings, treatment for diabetes and high blood pressure, and many other health care services they need to stay healthy. Apple Health clients enroll and renew online using *Washington Healthplanfinder*. Apple Health is administered by the Washington State Health Care Authority: www.hca.wa.gov.

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