



OFFICE OF THE CHANCELLOR

September 9, 2013

Dear University System of Maryland Employee:

1807
University of Maryland,
Baltimore

1856
University of Maryland,
College Park

1865
Bowie State University

1866
Towson University

1886
University of Maryland
Eastern Shore

1898
Frostburg State University

1900
Coppin State University

1925
Salisbury University

1925
University of Baltimore

1925
University of Maryland
Center for Environmental
Science

1947
University of Maryland
University College

1966
University of Maryland,
Baltimore County

In the coming weeks, University System of Maryland employees will have opportunities to make choices about health insurance coverage for themselves and their families. As a member of USM faculty or staff who is eligible for the State employees' health benefits plan, your new Open Enrollment period will begin on October 1 for benefits starting on January 1, 2014. For your colleagues and family members who are not eligible for the State employees' plan—especially those with no current health insurance or costly individual insurance plans—October 1 marks the beginning of an opportunity under the federal Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (the Affordable Care Act) to enroll in new, reasonably priced health insurance options.

This letter highlights some key information about health coverage for USM employees in 2014. The Affordable Care Act is complex, and there is a flood of information about the law and its impact appearing all around us. As part of your open enrollment packet, you will also receive a federally mandated notice on "Health Insurance Marketplace Coverage Options and your Health Coverage" that generally describes the impact of the Affordable Care Act on employees. As you review all of this information, please keep in mind a few important and simple facts that apply to USM employees who are eligible for State employees' health benefits.

The Affordable Care Act "Individual Mandate:" As of January 1, nearly every adult in the United States is required to have health insurance or pay a penalty. Fortunately, the State of Maryland has been a leader in establishing a network of affordable, comprehensive health insurance options for all of its citizens.

Eligibility for the State Employees' Health Plan: You are either already receiving health benefits under the Maryland State Employee and Retiree Health and Welfare Benefits Program (the "State Employees' Plan"), or are eligible to receive these benefits. The new open enrollment packet being distributed this month is for the plan year starting on January 1, 2014. You can be assured that the State Employees' Plan meets all of the requirements of the Affordable Care Act, and you will see little change in the benefits package or rates for 2014. Simply by enrolling in the State Employee's health and prescription drug plans, you will meet your responsibilities and

receive the benefits of the Affordable Care Act; these benefits include a comprehensive range of services, preventive services at no cost to you or your family, the ability to enroll your children in your employee plan until they turn age 26, and no limits on annual or lifetime benefits.

If you should decide not to enroll in the State Employees' Plan, you can still meet your obligations under the Individual Mandate by enrolling in other coverage, including plans offered on the Maryland Health Benefits Exchange, known as Maryland Health Connection. However, because you are eligible for State Employees' Health Plan, you likely will not be eligible for any of the new health insurance subsidies or tax credits that may otherwise be available under the Affordable Care Act through Maryland Health Connection for individual insurance plans. The Notice included in your open enrollment packet explains this in more detail.

Options for Those Who are not Eligible for the State Employees' Health Plan: If you have colleagues, friends, or family members who are not eligible for the State Employees' Health Plan or other employer coverage, you may suggest that they look into the Maryland Health Connection to get clear, understandable information about plans, rates and subsidies for new comprehensive, affordable health insurance options that will be available under the ACA. Starting in early October, they will be able to log in at marylandhealthconnection.gov, or call 1-855-642-8572, to get answers to their questions and help with the health insurance enrollment process.

If you have any questions or concerns about the impact of the Affordable Care Act on you or your family or the upcoming State Employees' Plan open enrollment, please check with the Benefits Coordinator in your institution's Human Resources Office.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "W E Kirwan".

William E. Kirwan
Chancellor

cc: USM Institution Presidents