

Take Action at Your Library

The Value of Understanding Health Insurance



Access to current and reliable health information is imperative for the well-being of everyone, and public libraries are frequently a “go-to” resource as people navigate complex issues related to health care, insurance, aging and more. Health literacy can help improve health outcomes and reduce medical costs when patients and their caregivers seek healthy habits, understand a new diagnosis, develop a self-care plan and emergency instructions.

Community Event to Facilitate Health Insurance Education and Enrollment

Purpose of outreach activity: Educate newly insured populations; increase awareness and raise confidence in using health insurance coverage.

KEY OBJECTIVES

1. Educate community about Affordable Care Act (ACA) health insurance benefits available in their state.
2. Assist in providing credible health information and/or enabling access to Navigators or other trained personnel who can facilitate the use of health insurance.

DESIRED OUTCOMES FOR PARTICIPANTS

1. **Knowledge:** Patrons will learn how to use their health insurance plan for maximum benefit.
2. **Confidence:** Patrons will gain confidence by understanding insurance jargon, practicing digital skills, learning where to go and whom to contact when help is needed.
3. **Application:** Patrons will be able to use their insurance card, select and schedule an appointment with a primary care doctor, take advantage of free preventive-health services, and find credible health information.
4. **Awareness:** Patrons will learn about other library resources such as health programs, technology programs and services, community partners, and library collections and databases.

PROPOSED STRUCTURE OF OUTREACH ACTIVITY

Type: An event involving two or more community groups in the library service area.

Recommended duration:

Half day (4 hours) or full day (8 hours)

Time: Work with community organizations to determine best time to access target groups.

Possible locations:

- Library
- Bookmobile
- School
- Community health organization
- Community recreation center
- Place of worship

Who should be on site? *Depending on model modifications and date:*

- **Community Educators** to educate people about the new health insurance law and its benefits
- **Insurance providers and enrollment agents/Navigators** (if not available, provide website info and/or phone numbers to state and federally-facilitated Marketplace to assist)
- **Health Department representatives**
- **Local community organizations and leaders**
- **Interpreters** (depending on cultural and linguistic needs of target population)

What materials are needed?

- Pamphlets, fact sheets, and/or fliers
- Pens and paper
- **Healthcare.gov Education and Outreach Resources** (<https://marketplace.cms.gov/outreach-and-education/outreach-and-education.html>)

Key Activities

- **Identify target audience(s)**
- **Identify locations:**
 - Where target populations are in a community, state, tribe or region
 - Pilot communities
 - Specific locations for events
- **Work with event location to set dates and times for the event**
- **Identify and recruit community partners for each event:**
 - Define specific desired contributions for each partner
 - The Office for Minority Health and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services can each conduct outreach to their partners.
- **Form a committee or working group that includes community partners from target communities.**
- **Meet with community partners to determine best approach to hosting event and reaching audience.**
- **Develop work plan/strategy and checklist for each community event.**
- **Promote the event(s) via email, newspaper, radio, social media, flyers, etc.**
- **Implement the event(s).**
- **Evaluate the event(s) using PLA's Project Outcome to learn how patrons are benefitting from those programs.**

Project Outcome is a free online toolkit designed to help public libraries understand and share the impact of essential library programs and services by providing standardized surveys and an easy-to-use process for measuring and analyzing outcomes. There are several survey topics to choose from, but we recommend using either the Education/Lifelong Learning or Health Immediate Survey to measure this type of program. This survey topic helps libraries capture general knowledge gained, increased confidence, intent to apply what was learned, and increased awareness of library resources and services. Using this survey will also help libraries capture what patrons like most about their programs and how they can be improved. Once survey responses are collected in the toolkit, libraries have access to ready-made reports and interactive data visualizations to better understand and share their results with staff and stakeholders. To learn more or to register for free, visit www.projectoutcome.org.
- **Potential Partners and their contributions**
 - **Faith-based organizations** can provide locations to host events and access to their constituents.
 - **Insurance companies** can provide enrollment experts/personnel to speak about insurance benefits.
 - **Health departments and State Offices of Minority Health** may have information about uninsured populations, Marketplaces and may also provide speakers.
 - **Community Health Centers** can assist with outreach to their uninsured and underinsured clients.
 - **Community Relations Departments of private hospitals** may also be able to assist with outreach and awareness efforts.

This outline is intended to provide guidance to library staff conducting a health insurance literacy event or program. (Adapted from *National Partnership for Action to End Health Disparities Affordable Care Act Resource Kit, 2014.*)

ala.org/pla/initiatives/connectingoutcoverage





Checklist for a Health Insurance Education and Enrollment Event

BEFORE THE EVENT

- Consider partners that:
 - have credibility with the target population
 - can reach large numbers of people from the target population
 - have adequate facilities that can be used for the events
 - can contribute human, financial, or in-kind resources, or
 - already are conducting outreach, education and enrollment activities and are willing to pool their resources and marketing strategies.
- Identify and confirm locations that are convenient, accessible, and familiar to the target population.
- Ensure that date/time of event is convenient for the target population.
- Determine the cultural and linguistic needs of the target population.
- Provide translated materials, if needed.
- Print copies of the evaluation form.
- Arrange for interpreters to be on site, if needed.
- Determine the set-up for the location and way-finding signage to direct the flow of traffic (e.g. registration desk, information desk, computer stations, completion of evaluation form upon exit).
- Engage trained volunteers, Navigators, Assistance Councilors, and representatives from health plans to be on-site.
- Create signs and badges for on-site staff.
- Ensure an adequate number of copies of materials, including event evaluation forms.
- Create descriptions of each person's role and responsibilities when on-site.
- Conduct one or two orientations for on-site staff.
- Consult with PLA's Project Outcome team on how to document the impact of your outreach efforts (<https://www.projectoutcome.org/contact/new>).
- Conduct a "walk-through" of the location before the event.

ON-SITE

- Make sure every person working/volunteering at the event wears a badge displaying their name and role.
- Post signage.
- Have clipboards with evaluation forms and pencils available.
- Test the audio/visual equipment before the presentation.

AFTER THE EVENT

- Distribute and collect the completed evaluations.
- Enter the completed evaluation data into www.projectoutcome.org
- Hold staff and partner debriefs to evaluate your program's successes and challenges.
- Follow up with patrons using Project Outcome Follow-Up Surveys to understand immediate impact of program.
- Determine library goals to achieve long-term, collaborative impact on the community.