

# TELLURIDE DAILY PLANET

## NEWS

### Tri-County Health Network receives grant

*Program will help enroll residents in health insurance plans*

[Print Page](#)

**By Heather Sackett**  
**Associate Editor**

Published: Wednesday, July 24, 2013 6:06 AM CDT

The Tri-County Health Network has received \$250,000 toward helping residents sign up for health insurance plans.

The grant, from Connect for Health Colorado, will help citizens of Montrose, Ouray and San Miguel counties select and enroll in health insurance plans. The Affordable Care Act requires that all Americans enroll in some type of program by the end of January 2014.

According to Tri-County Health Network Executive Director Lynn Borup, there are many local residents who don't qualify for Medicare but who can't afford to buy private health insurance and their employers don't offer it. Through the grant, TCHN will become part of the Connect for Health Assistance Network and provide assistance to those shopping for healthcare in Colorado's new health insurance marketplace.

A lot of it is education," Borup said. It's really an education campaign, as well as helping them enroll and helping with terminology. It can be confusing as they look through plans."

Borup said Tri-County Health will be hiring three people to do outreach and education throughout the area in a "boots on the ground" approach. The health coverage guides will help citizens navigate the world of co-pays, out-of-pocket maximums, specialists, tax credits and how the Affordable Care Act will impact them. The guides will meet with clients in their area, and engage community partners like schools, clinics, health departments and town and county boards.

HCGs will set up educational booths at community events, including parent-teacher conferences, back-to-school nights, child find events, local health fairs, immunization days, farmers markets, summer festivals and other related events," Borup said in an email. Partnering with our local libraries, small employers and other community based organizations, we will offer 'lunch and learns' and 'enrollment fairs' to assist in creating accounts and navigating the exchange."

More than 19 percent of the population of the three counties is uninsured. The grant is designed to target the roughly 12,000 people who are actively seeking healthcare in the tri-county area. TCHN is one of 57 groups across Colorado that has been selected to provide in-person assistance for Connect for Health Colorado.

Because of its rural nature, Borup said the region qualifies as a medically underserved community and has a shortage of health professionals. As the population of insured people grows, so too will the use of the healthcare system.

The Telluride Medical Center has needed a new, bigger facility for years and is in the process of gathering input about the community's health and wellness needs before it begins the hunt for a new space in earnest. Residents can still take a survey on Telluride Health and Wellness Initiative website at [telluridehealthideas.org](http://telluridehealthideas.org).

The implementation of ObamaCare will fundamentally expand services and usage across our region," said Davis Fansler, a member of the Telluride Health & Wellness Community Council. It's important that everyone be aware of the coming changes and be prepared for the implications. The Health & Wellness

Community Council has been actively examining the way this shift in policy will change the reality of healthcare in our region, and we're excited about the opportunities for previously uninsured individuals from all walks of life to enroll in healthcare plans."

Copyright © 2013 - Telluride Daily Planet

[\[x\] Close Window](#)