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Colorado Health Insurance Exchange Opens Oct. 1

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TELLURIDE –The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, or “Obama Care,” goes into effect October 1.

“Because more people will be insured in 2014, there will be a significant increase in the number of people accessing care,” said Lynn Borup, executive director, Tri-County Health Network. “This will create increased wait times to get in to see a doctor, and especially to see specialists. Some experts are saying that a three month wait for a specialist could increase to a six months. ”

Named “Connect for Health Colorado,” the exchange is designed to help people understand what their health benefits options are and find coverage.

The ACA requires that all Americans be enrolled in some type of program by January 31, 2014. Individuals can either decide to keep their current insurance plan or purchase an insurance plan through an online marketplace otherwise known as a “health insurance exchange pool.”

Colorado’s Connect for Health Colorado start selling coverage on October 1 that becomes effective January 1, 2014. Individuals may qualify for discounts if their individual income is from \$15,302 to \$46,021 (\$31,155 to \$93,700 for a family of four).

By 2014, it is estimated that the number of uninsured people will drop to just over 11 percent and the underinsured population should reach near zero.

Many experts predict a fundamental consolidation of providers within the healthcare system. Preliminary research has shown that as demand increases and payment reimbursements flatten due to competition and efficiency, clinics and medical centers will need to consolidate or develop joint ventures with larger healthcare systems to stay financially viable.

For more information on the Community Council, visit www.bigtent.com/groups/tellwell; for residents of the Telluride region seeking more information about the Telluride Health & Wellness Center Initiative, please visit www.telluridehealthideas.org.

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