

## For Immediate Release

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Contact: Seán Sheehan, Department of Vermont Health Access  
802-585-6339 / [Sean.Sheehan@vermont.gov](mailto:Sean.Sheehan@vermont.gov)

### **Open Enrollment Countdown: Just 15 Days Left to Sign up for 2018 Health Coverage** Customer Support Center to Open Next Two Saturdays (9am-1pm)

WATERBURY, VT – State officials marked the end of the first month of Open Enrollment by thanking Vermonters for acting promptly ahead of this year’s deadline and reminding those who still need coverage to be sure to log in to [VermontHealthConnect.gov](http://VermontHealthConnect.gov) or call by December 15<sup>th</sup>. They also announced that the customer support center will be open the next two Saturdays (12/2 & 12/9) to take applications and change requests from new and renewing members.

“Most calls are being answered in under a minute,” said Cory Gustafson, Commissioner of the Department of Vermont Health Access, “but it’s important to note that the actual application can be lengthy, especially for new members who are seeking financial help for the first time. The Saturday hours can be a good option for Vermonters who are busy during the week.”

The special Saturday hours are offered for new applicants signing up for coverage and for existing members who want to change plans, add a household member to their plan, or report a change in income or other household information. Members will also be able to pay for their coverage and request online account access, while those who want to address other account issues are asked to call during the week or to log into their online accounts.

More than four out of five Vermonters who sign up through Vermont’s health insurance marketplace qualify for federal premium tax credits and/or state subsidies to lower their monthly premiums. [Income thresholds](#) vary by household size, going up to about \$48,000 for an individual, \$65,000 for a two-person household, and \$98,000 for a family of four. The amount of financial help varies by household income, with a typical individual member having an annual income just over \$25,000 and receiving nearly \$400 per month toward the 2018 insurance plan of their choice. Couples and families generally receive more. In addition, income-qualifying Vermonters also have the choice to enroll in an Enhanced Silver plan with cost-sharing reductions. These plans allow members to pay a lower deductible and maximum out-of-pocket–like gold and platinum plans offer – while only paying the monthly premium of a silver plan.

State officials encourage Vermonters to evaluate their options before confirming a plan. Vermont Health Connect’s [Plan Comparison Tool](#), which can help individuals and small business employees determine the best choice for their families’ needs and budgets, has been used more than 15,000 times since the launch of the 2018 tool. This is an increase of nearly 40% over last year. The interactive site allows Vermonters to compare plans not just by monthly premiums and deductibles, but also by estimated total annual costs based on the age and health status of each household member.

Vermonters who qualify for financial help have three ways to apply through Vermont’s health insurance marketplace: online (<http://VermontHealthConnect.gov>), by phone (toll-free: 855-899-9600), or with one of more than 150 [in-person assisters](#) located across the state.

Vermonters whose household incomes are too high to qualify for financial help have the additional option of enrolling directly with Blue Cross Blue Shield of Vermont or MVP Health Care and establishing a single point of contact with their insurance carrier.

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