



MARYLAND CITIZENS' HEALTH INITIATIVE

## *FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE*

*March 22, 2012*

CONTACT: Vincent DeMarco, President, MCHI  
Matthew Celentano, Deputy Director, MCHI

410-591-9162  
443-253-7988

## HEALTH CARE FOR ALL COALITION CELEBRATES AFFORDABLE CARE ACT TWO YEAR ANNIVERSARY

Tomorrow, March 23, 2012 marks the 2 year anniversary of President Obama signing the federal Affordable Care Act which will extend health care coverage to 32 million Americans, reduce the number of uninsured Marylanders by 50%, and help make health care more affordable for all of us.

Under the leadership of Governor Martin O'Malley and Lt. Governor Anthony Brown, Maryland has made great strides in fully implementing the new law. Just this past week, key committees in the Maryland General Assembly endorsed legislation to give the state's Health Care Exchange Board the tools it needs to make health care more affordable. (See attached memo showing how similar authority worked to make health care more affordable in Massachusetts.) In addition, Maryland has leveraged millions of dollars of special federal funding to support building the infrastructure necessary to prepare our health care system for rapid growth, and has earned millions of dollars through an "Early Innovator" grant and performance bonuses thanks to the state's achievement in advanced implementation, and efforts to streamline Medicaid enrollment.

While the law will not be fully implemented until 2020, Marylanders are already taking advantage of the law's many new insurance reforms and coverage provisions that have already gone into effect. These provisions include a dependent coverage extension to young adults up to age 26 and a prohibition on insurance companies denying coverage for pre-existing conditions for children, and in 2014 insurance companies will not be able to deny coverage to adults with pre-existing conditions either.

In Baltimore City, Tracy Newsome's two sons have both benefited from the law. "My sons have asthma. Fortunately their asthma can be managed by medication but, their medications are



**MARYLAND CITIZENS' HEALTH INITIATIVE**

expensive. If we didn't have insurance, it would cost us more than \$500 every month for medication alone for each of them."

Thanks to health reform, her 24 year old son who had lost his coverage was able to get back on to her family's insurance plan. Now, she can rest assured that both sons won't be rejected or charged more for coverage by insurance companies in the future simply because of their asthma.

"Our family is very grateful for this positive change in the law," she said.

The law also created tax credits to help small businesses provide health insurance to their employees. It's estimated that 66,000 Maryland businesses can take advantage of these tax credits. Jamal Lee of Breasia Studios in Laurel, MD, owns one of those businesses.

"Breasia Studios has been in the business of bringing events to life with professional A/V management since 2005. When we started, we couldn't afford to provide health care coverage to our employees. Now, thanks to the new health care law, we have been able to take advantage of new tax credits and subsidies that help us provide benefits and invest in our greatest assets--our talented, professional staff. It also makes our organization more attractive to quality workers and ultimately saves us on our bottom line."

"Maryland should be a model for the entire nation on how to reap the full benefits of the Affordable Care Act," said Vincent DeMarco, President of the Maryland Citizens' Health Initiative. "Thanks to President Obama's leadership in enacting the Affordable Care Act and Governor O'Malley and Lt. Governor Brown's leadership in Maryland, we are making great strides toward our goal of making quality health care affordable for all Marylanders."

*The Health Care for All! Coalition is a broad-based coalition of over 1200 faith, labor, business and community groups that have been working to guarantee all Marylanders access to quality, affordable health care. To learn more, visit <http://www.healthcareforall.com>*

###