



**Date:** October 6, 2008

**General questions:** Jim Sellers 503 945-5738

**Technical questions:** Karen House 503 945-6254

## **Final round of OHP-Standard applications to be mailed Tuesday**

---

The process of enrolling several thousand low-income adults in the Oregon Health Plan's Standard benefit package, begun last winter when a reservation list was opened, will reach a concluding milestone Tuesday with the mailing of the final round of applications.

The 3,000 OHP-Standard applications being mailed Tuesday will go to low-income adults in all 36 Oregon counties. A state computer randomly drew their names from the reservation list, on which more than 91,000 names were placed in January and February.

OHP-Standard had been closed to new enrollment since mid-2004 after provider taxes on large hospitals and Medicaid managed care plans were substituted for state General Fund; the program was subsequently limited to a monthly average of 24,000 adults. The program was reopened to limited new enrollment this year after the number of people covered fell to fewer than 18,000.

"We worked with health care advocates and partners to come up with the fairest way to enroll several thousand people in a program for which tens of thousands of Oregon adults would qualify," said Jim Edge, state Medicaid director in the Oregon Department of Human Services. The state has estimated approximately 140,000 low-income Oregon adults are eligible.

The method – randomly drawing names from a highly publicized reservation list that accepted names for five weeks – was approved by the federal government, which provides more than 60 percent of Medicaid dollars that fund the Oregon Health Plan and must approve major changes in what still is a health care demonstration project. The Oregon Health Plan began in 1994.

Tuesday's mailing will bring to 30,000 the number of OHP-Standard applications mailed since March 5. So far, 6,500 Oregonians have been found eligible for medical coverage as a result of returning OHP-Standard applications.

OHP-Standard is financed by a combination of taxes on hospitals and Medicaid managed care plans, federal matching dollars and client premiums. Because of a change in federal rules, current financing for the program will end Oct. 1, 2009, when all managed care plans – not just those delivering Medicaid services – would have to be taxed.

The 10 counties whose residents will receive the largest numbers of applications are Multnomah (730), Lane (330), Marion (221), Washington (220), Clackamas (169), Jackson (161), Douglas (140), Josephine (127), Deschutes (93) and Linn (78). Rural counties receiving fewer than 20 applications each are Baker, Crook, Gilliam, Grant, Harney, Lake, Malheur, Morrow, Sherman, Tillamook, Wallowa and Wheeler.

To be considered for eligibility, OHP-Standard applications mailed in October must be returned by Nov. 24 either to the DHS health plan processing center in Salem or to any DHS field office. Applications may be returned even if not all income or citizenship documents have been obtained; the state will hold an application so long as the applicant is making a good-faith effort to obtain the required documents.

People with questions or who want help in completing an application may call 1-800-699-9075.

OHP-Standard accounts for roughly 5 percent of the Oregon Health Plan, which covers approximately 430,000 low-income Oregonians.

The Oregon Health Plan's larger Plus benefit package is always open to low-income people who are 65 or older, blind, disabled, pregnant, younger than 19 or who qualify for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families. Applications for OHP-Plus are available by calling 1-800-359-9517 weekdays between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m., Pacific time.

###