



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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LT. GOVERNOR BROWN, CAREFIRST BLUECROSS BLUESHIELD, HEALTH CARE FOR ALL, AND STATE OFFICIALS ANNOUNCE CAMPAIGN TO EDUCATE SMALL BUSINESSES ON NEW TAX CREDITS

New federal health care tax credits will help small businesses afford coverage for employees

BALTIMORE, Md. (March 15, 2011) – At a press conference today at the Small Business Resource Center in Baltimore, Lt. Governor Anthony G. Brown, CareFirst BlueCross BlueShield, the Maryland Health Care for All! Coalition, Maryland business leaders and other state officials announced a new advertising campaign designed to encourage small businesses in Maryland to take advantage of new federal tax credits that make health care coverage more affordable.

Small businesses with 25 or fewer employees and average wages of less than \$50,000 are eligible for a tax credit of up to 35 percent of health insurance costs. It is estimated that 66,000 or 80 percent of Maryland's 82,600 small businesses with fewer than 25 employees are eligible for these health care tax credits. To learn more about the tax credits, Maryland small businesses can visit www.smallbusinesstaxcredits.org, call **410-235-9000**, or text **HEALTH to 877877**.

“Maryland small businesses are the engines for job growth in our State, but year after year they are being overburdened by the skyrocketing cost of health insurance,” said Lt. Governor Anthony Brown. **“These tax credits are just one of the many ways health care reform will help Maryland small businesses access more affordable coverage for their employees, and we are fully committed to ensuring they have the information they need to maximize every advantage that the Affordable Care Act provides.”**

“For a small business like mine, the bottom line is very important - every penny counts. Thanks to the federal tax credits, I now save money while offering my employees health insurance,” said Laurel small business owner, Jamal Lee, who joined with the coalition at today's announcement. **“Thank you Governor O'Malley, Lieutenant Governor Brown, and the leaders of Maryland's state agencies, the Maryland Citizens' Health Initiative, and CareFirst for spreading the good news! It's imperative that every small business hear about the credit!”**

The Maryland Citizens' Health Initiative has partnered with CareFirst to fund the \$150,000 campaign, which includes two radio advertisements set to air in the Baltimore area. Lt. Governor Brown was joined by Congressman Sarbanes, Health Secretary Dr. Josh Sharfstein and Department of Business and Economic Development Deputy Secretary Dominick Murray and many others to help get the message out to small business owners.

“Understanding that the small group market is price sensitive, this tax credit can make a difference for many employers that must weigh whether they can provide health care coverage for their employees,” said

Chet Burrell, CareFirst BlueCross BlueShield President and CEO. **“Small businesses offer about 52 percent of private sector jobs in the state, so the potential impact of this credit is considerable.”**

"These federal health care tax credits will help tremendously to make health care more affordable for small businesses," said Vincent DeMarco, President of the Maryland Citizens' Health Initiative. **"We look forward to working with the O'Malley-Brown Administration and with CareFirst to make sure that every small business owner in Maryland who is eligible for these tax credits knows about them."**

"Healthy workers are productive workers," said DHMH Secretary Joshua M. Sharfstein, M.D. **"We're working with our public and private partners to help small business owners provide employees and their families with the health care they need at a cost they can afford."**

According to research by the independent Hilltop Institute, the federal Affordable Care Act (ACA) will save Maryland \$850 million and cut the number of Marylanders living without health insurance in half by 2020. Maryland has received over \$100 million in federal grants for the implementation of the ACA, including a \$6.2 million grant from the Department of Health and Human Services for the front end of the health exchange. Parts of the ACA have already been enacted, including the elimination of lifetime dollar limits on insurance coverage and a ban on excluding children from coverage because of a preexisting condition.

Lt. Governor Brown leads the O'Malley-Brown administration's health care portfolio that has made significant reforms to the state's health care system and expanded access to health coverage to over 255,000 Marylanders who were uninsured four years ago. He co-chairs the Maryland Health Care Reform Coordinating Council (HCRCC) and the Maryland Health Quality and Cost Council. During the 2010 Legislative Session, Brown led efforts to pass significant health care legislation that fights fraud, waste and abuse in the Medicaid system and creates a "Medical Home" program that provides incentives to primary care practices to promote preventative and coordinated care. A veteran of the Iraq War and a Colonel in the U.S. Army Reserves, Brown also championed a legislative package in 2008 and 2009 to improve mental and behavioral health services for Maryland's veterans.

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You may be eligible to receive a tax credit on your 2010 tax returns!

SERVICES AVAILABLE

INFORMATION

To learn more about the tax credit visit:

www.smallbusinesstaxcredits.org

TAX CREDIT CALCULATOR

To determine if you qualify for the tax credit, use our simple online calculator at:

www.smallbusinesstaxcredits.org

CLAIMING THE TAX CREDIT

To learn how to claim your credit, please contact your accountant or professional tax preparer.

For more information, visit the IRS website and search for "Form 8941":

www.irs.gov



SMALL BUSINESS HEALTH CARE TAX CREDITS

Your Healthy Bottom Line

You qualify if you:

- Cover at least 50% of your employees' health insurance premiums
- Employ 25 or fewer full-time equivalent employees
- Have employees that earn an average of \$50,000 or less

Can your small business benefit?

Text **HEALTH** to:

877877

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Small Business Tax Credits
Your Healthy Bottom Line

