



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **\$2.44M grant will fund ACA enrollment help for North Carolina consumers** *Shortened Affordable Care Act enrollment period runs Nov. 1-Dec. 15*

**RALEIGH** – North Carolina's Affordable Care Act Navigators are gearing up for the start of the ACA's fifth – and shortest – enrollment period, which runs Nov. 1-Dec. 15.

The NC Navigator Consortium, the state's largest and only statewide Navigator group, is receiving \$2,444,703 in federal funding – the same amount as it received in 2016 – to provide outreach, education and enrollment assistance during the upcoming Open Enrollment period. The U.S. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services awarded the grant to Consortium leader Legal Aid of North Carolina (LANC).

This year's 45-day Open Enrollment is the shortest in ACA history; the last three Open Enrollments lasted three months, while the first lasted six.

"It's important for consumers to know about the shorter time-frame, and to start the enrollment process early," said Mark Van Arnem, Consortium outreach director. "Comparing plans, applying for financial help and completing enrollment can be a multi-step process.

"If you have questions," added Van Arnem, "connect with a Navigator as soon as possible."

Navigators are certified experts trained to help consumers enroll in coverage on the Health Insurance Marketplace, [HealthCare.gov](http://HealthCare.gov), which offers affordable, comprehensive plans under the ACA.

Other than the shortened enrollment period, little has changed this year:

- Financial assistance is still available to consumers to help pay their premiums. When the cost of premiums goes up, so does the amount of financial assistance available.
- All plans still cover essential health benefits – from hospital visits to long-term wellness care.
- Navigators are ready to provide free, unbiased, confidential in-person assistance to North Carolinians shopping for affordable coverage.

Consumers can call the Consortium's toll-free statewide helpline, 1-855-733-3711, with questions or to schedule an appointment with a Navigator. Consumers can also schedule appointments with a Navigator online using the Get Covered Connector at [GetCoveredAmerica.org](http://GetCoveredAmerica.org).

Consumers currently enrolled in a Marketplace plan will automatically be re-enrolled in it unless they choose a new plan. The Consortium urges consumers to seek in-person assistance before automatically re-enrolling; prices and options change each year, and a Navigator can help consumers be sure they are in the best plan for their families, and are receiving the right financial help.

The NC Navigator Consortium is a partnership of 13 healthcare, social service, and legal aid organizations that helps North Carolina consumers enroll in affordable health insurance plans under the ACA. The consortium is led by Legal Aid of North Carolina ([LegalAidNC.org](http://LegalAidNC.org)), a statewide nonprofit law firm providing free civil legal aid to low-income North Carolinians.

**Media Contacts:**

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### **FAST FACTS**

**Call, or Click, for Free Help!**

Call toll-free: 1-855-733-3711

Schedule online: [GCAconnector.org](http://GCAconnector.org)

**Mark Your Calendars!**

*Shortened enrollment period!*

Opens: November 1, 2017

Closes: December 15, 2017

**Financial Assistance Is Available!**

About 90 percent of enrolled North Carolinians receive financial assistance. Navigators can help consumers apply for it.

**Plans Cover Comprehensive Care**

All Health Insurance Marketplace plans provide coverage of comprehensive care, including prescriptions, hospital visits, mental health, maternity care, doctor visits and more.



Greenville-based nonprofit Access East, Inc. ([AccessEast.org](http://AccessEast.org)) primarily coordinates patient-focused, provider-driven healthcare for the Medicaid and uninsured populations across 27 eastern North Carolina counties. The Access East **ACA Certified Navigator Program**, funded through the LANC Navigator Consortium, offers Marketplace Health Insurance enrollment assistance across the same coverage area. Call **(252) 847-3027** for information on the program, or to request free, unbiased local assistance.