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## Thousands more now have health insurance; Health Departments prep for Marketplace enrollment

NORTHERN MICHIGAN – Fifteen thousand Northern Michigan residents are now covered by health insurance, either through the Healthy Michigan Plan or through policies purchased on the Health Insurance Marketplace. This represents about 60 percent of the people who were uninsured in Alpena, Antrim, Charlevoix, Cheboygan, Emmet, Montmorency, Otsego and Presque Isle Counties in 2012, the last time the census estimated the number.

"This is a tremendous achievement for Northern Michigan, and a testament to the success of the Affordable Care Act," said Linda Yaroch, Health Officer for the Health Department of Northwest Michigan. "The ACA Navigators and Application Counselors throughout our Health Districts have assisted thousands of people with enrollment in the Marketplace and the Healthy Michigan Plan. We're ready to provide even more assistance this year."

Open enrollment in the Health Insurance Marketplace for 2015 begins November 15, 2014. Yaroch said the Health Department of Northwest Michigan will be adding three (3) new Navigators this year to help Northern Michigan residents understand plan options, subsidies and alternatives that may be available for their families and themselves.

"We're also pleased that the Northern Health Plan has agreed to fund the Enroll Northern Michigan effort again this year," Yaroch added. She said this year's efforts will target harder-to-reach populations and will engage local businesses, county offices, parents of school-age children, churches, transitional housing locations, and prison inmates being released, among others.

The Health Department of Northwest Michigan is mandated by the Michigan Public Health Code to promote wellness, prevent disease, provide quality healthcare, address health problems of vulnerable populations, and protect the environment for the residents and visitors of Antrim, Charlevoix, Emmet, and Otsego counties. For additional information, or for enrollment assistance, call (800) 432-4121.