



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Nonprofit Works to Educate Kentuckians about Health Care Coverage Options

LOUISVILLE, KY – In a state where more than [300,000](#) individuals under the age of 65 remain uninsured, and an additional 240,000 are at risk of losing their Medicaid coverage, The Asclepius Initiative (TAI) steps up to address the challenges that have plagued Kentucky's healthcare landscape. TAI, based in Louisville, recently conducted a [survey](#) revealing that 86% of the uninsured and 64% of those with insurance have been forced to avoid, skip, or discontinue vital medical care and medications due to financial constraints.

"Wouldn't it be nice if we didn't have to jump through a bunch of hoops to get medical care?" TAI's founder and CEO, Dr. Susan Bornstein, asked. "Even for those who have commercial coverage or supplements, the rules, regulations, and terminology can be confusing or incomprehensible, so we wanted to help. Better understanding can translate into more confident choices and utilization, leading to better outcomes."

Recognizing the need to promote health equity in underserved populations across the Commonwealth, TAI secured a grant from the Kentucky Department of Public Health's Office of Health Equity. This grant, which focuses on empowering Black and Spanish-speaking, and rural communities, allows TAI to collaborate with eight dedicated partners throughout Kentucky. The grant started July 1, 2023, and runs through May 31, 2024.

"We wanted to work with partners that are trusted messengers for evidence-based health information in their communities," explained Dr. Bornstein. Three of those partners are the Southeast Kentucky Area Health Education Center (AHEC), located in Hazard, the North Central AHEC, located in Florence, and the Northeast Kentucky AHEC, located in Morehead.

"We wanted to be part of this project because every Kentuckian deserves to have health insurance," stated Kathleen Couch, Health Careers Coordinator at Southeast Kentucky AHEC. She noted, "Southeast Kentucky is a rural area, and some of the older members of our communities here have little to no higher education. Through this partnership with The Asclepius Initiative, we can work with them to understand their options and help them find the health care coverage that meets their needs. In November, we set up a

table with information provided by The Asclepius Initiative at the Hazard/Perry County Senior Center and at the Knott County Senior Citizens Center in Hindman. We plan to visit other senior centers soon.”

Shea Morgan, Community Health Education Specialist at North Central AHEC, said this project fits perfectly with their mission of reducing barriers to healthcare access in traditionally underserved communities. “Everyone should have access to the services they need. Promoting an increased understanding of our health insurance system can put our community members on the correct path toward improved wellness,” Morgan emphasized. Regarding his aspirations for this partnership, he expressed, “Through this education, we aim to empower members of our community to make informed decisions and enhance their access to the care they deserve.” North Central AHEC works closely with members of the Spanish-speaking community. This fall, staff have held several events to educate Kentuckians about access to healthcare and distribute materials created as part of this project.

David Gross, Director of Northeast Kentucky AHEC, stated, “Our region has special populations that have even more acute issues related to health insurance access and literacy. Our AHEC has worked closely with individuals with substance use disorder (SUD). This project will link those in need within the general population, and particularly our at-risk SUD population, to much-needed insurance coverage. For our SUD population, it will also better enable them to access treatment services that could mean the difference between restarting a productive life or being in danger of a potentially fatal drug use relapse.”

Open enrollment for 2024 coverage through Kentucky’s marketplace, kynect, began November 1st and runs through January 16th. Medicare open enrollment runs through December 7th.

Through TAI’s partnership with organizations like the Southeast Kentucky, North Central, and Northeast Kentucky AHECs, The Asclepius Initiative is making health care coverage more understandable for Kentuckians, reducing the odds that anyone has to forgo necessary medical care. TAI stands committed to achieving a healthier, more equitable future for Kentuckians.

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About The Asclepius Initiative

Founded in 2021, the mission of The Asclepius Initiative is to improve the health and economic stability of Kentuckians through educating, inspiring, and mobilizing people to advocate for a universally accessible, affordable, equitable, and high-quality healthcare delivery system. Learn more at **[AsclepiusInitiative.org](https://www.asclepiusinitiative.org)**