



United Way of Anchorage

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Affordable Care Act open enrollment begins Nov. 1: Navigators are here to help**

**Anchorage AK** – United Way of Anchorage navigators are standing by to help Alaskans find health care insurance when the Affordable Care Act’s open enrollment period for 2021 begins Sunday, November 1.

The enrollment period runs until Tuesday, December 15. Alaskans can connect to online help from navigators by calling 2-1-1 in Anchorage; 1-800-478-2221 outside Anchorage, or by email at [health@ak.org](mailto:health@ak.org). 2-1-1 can also connect people to translation services in 170+ languages.

Free guidance and expertise in finding the right health insurance plan, access to Medicaid and other benefits may be more vital than ever during the COVID-19 pandemic, when thousands of Alaskans have lost their health insurance plans with their livelihoods.

“If you don’t have coverage, call us,” said Jane Straight, Director of Income and Health impact at United Way of Anchorage. United Way navigators can clear up confusion of the multiple choices in obtaining coverage for families and individuals. Navigators can also dispel myths and misinformation that may keep people from applying for a plan that fits both their budget and their needs. They can help people steer clear of mistakes they don’t even realize they’re making.

The online service means that even in a pandemic, navigators can do one-on-one sessions to match people’s needs with available plans.

Navigators can help consumers learn about discounts based on income and tax credits that help make coverage more affordable – and allow consumers to take advantage of rates that are declining in Alaska by an average of 7 percent. Navigators also are up to date on changes in plans and prices. They won’t endorse a specific plan, but will lay out clear, accurate information and comparisons.

“When you feel like you made a well-informed choice, you feel better about the decision,” Straight said.

Any Alaskan who feels they can’t afford or don’t qualify for an ACA health care plan should reconsider and call 2-1-1. People are often surprised to learn that they can afford comprehensive health care coverage or qualify for Medicaid. Nationally in 2019, more than 80 percent of ACA health insurance shoppers qualified for financial assistance.

Over the last seven years, United Way of Anchorage navigators have provided assistance to 22,800 Alaskans, including helping 6,700 with enrollment in ACA plans.

In addition to the regular ACA enrollment period (November 1 – December 15), those who have had a life-changing event outside the enrollment period – such as a job loss and business closures – can call 2-1-1 for navigator assistance with ACA health insurance, Medicaid and other benefits.

### **About United Way of Anchorage**

United Way of Anchorage is a community of donors, advocates, volunteers, and partners working together to improve the health, education and financial stability of every person in our community. LIVE UNITED.

[www.liveunitedanc.org](http://www.liveunitedanc.org)