



**Consumers for
AFFORDABLE
Health Care**

*Advocating the right to health care
for every man, woman and child.*

39 Green Street
Post Office Box 2490
Augusta, ME 04338-2490

Tel: 207 / 622 – 7045
Fax: 207 / 622 – 7077
E: consumerhealth@mainecahc.org
Web: www.mainecahc.org

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Contact: Cherilee Budrick
207-622-7083 X 211
cbudrick@mainecahc.org

Consumer Group Helps 10,000th Mainer!

10,000 Maine residents are now receiving the health care they need or got answers to their health care questions thanks to Consumers for Affordable Health Care's (CAHC) toll free HelpLine! This is quite a milestone for both our non-profit organization and the people of Maine! Our HelpLine started out small in 1997, answering about 11 calls per month during our first year. Those calls could take anywhere from two minutes to two weeks to resolve. Today, that figure has increased into a still-growing average of 167 calls per month.

I talk to hard-working Maine families every day on the HelpLine. Some families are even working multiple jobs, trying to make ends meet in these tough times, but they still cannot afford expensive private insurance. Or, they can't afford the co-pays, deductibles and coinsurance on the plans that they do have. It's hard enough to keep the gas and oil tanks filled and healthy food on the table. I love my job as HelpLine Coordinator because I can often help so many wonderful and diverse people who are genuinely in need, which means I never forget why it is so important to work toward quality, affordable coverage that is guaranteed for everyone.

- Jaime D'Errico, CAHC HelpLine Coordinator

The HelpLine assists individuals, families, and businesses by providing them with information and referrals on various health coverage programs including private insurance plans, MaineCare, discount pharmacy programs, hospital-based programs, and DirigoChoice. And, if needed, the Helpline provides application assistance and help navigating public assistance programs to people once they are enrolled. We are not affiliated with any insurance companies nor do we sell insurance. We are simply a non-profit consumer health group that is here to help.

I had just been laid-off when I called the HelpLine. I had been given the option of COBRA, but it was just too expensive at our newly reduced income, and it would only last for so long. When I called the HelpLine they talked to me about MaineCare, said it looked like my household was eligible, and encouraged me to apply. The HelpLine staff helped me fill out the application and enroll, which allowed me to protect my family while I looked for a new job and went back to school part time. - A HelpLine Caller

The HelpLine is the only statewide toll-free "one-stop" information/referral resource in Maine for people seeking health care coverage assistance. It is a free service for everyone in Maine.



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I am definitely very proud to work on the HelpLine. But I also recognize that this work is just a band-aid on the real problem. I am even more proud of the fact that I work for an organization that provides the band-aid - and then goes beyond it. My organization helps people navigate a fractured system, but it also researches, educates on and advocates for a long-term solution. Guaranteed, affordable, quality health care for everyone. - Jaime D'Errico, CAHC HelpLine Coordinator

The fact that the HelpLine call numbers are growing so steadily, we believe, is a sign of the growing need for health reform. A plan is needed that will first bring quality health care to all Mainers and second be at a price that fits each family's individual budget.

I had private insurance but it didn't cover much. When I was pregnant, for example, it didn't cover the actual birth or baby's jaundice. So even though I had coverage, I am paying \$11,000 in bills and couldn't afford to keep paying \$285 a month for the coverage that put me in this position. The HelpLine staff talked to me about my options and we settled on DirigoChoice. Now, I am saving almost \$200 a month in premiums, and getting comprehensive coverage that I can really use. - A HelpLine Caller

Uninsured? Can't afford the coverage you have? Small business owner or sole-proprietor looking for options? Currently enrolled in a coverage program and have questions? Call the toll free CAHC HelpLine at 1-800-965-7476!

Consumers for Affordable Health Care is Maine's largest consumer health coalition. We also provide health care advocacy, research, legal and policy analysis, and training and education to our community. We have been working in Maine for 20 years to get every man, woman and child quality, affordable health care.

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For more information Contact:

Cherilee Budrick
Communications Coordinator- C.A.H.C.
207-622-7083
cbudrick@mainecahc.org

"Health care should be a right, not a privilege."