



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Media Contact:

Lauren Day, Director of Communications

Phone: 360-346-2250 or 360-219-6171

Email: laurend@sp-mc.org

Summit Pacific Reacts to Insurance Coverage Changes for Grays Harbor Residents

Elma, Wash. – Summit Pacific Medical Center is responding to the news that Premera Blue Cross (Premera) has decided to pull out of the individual insurance market in Grays Harbor County, Washington. This news was made public earlier this month.

The individual market was established with the Affordable Care Act (Obamacare). Premera was the only insurer providing coverage through the individual market for Grays Harbor County. With Premera's departure, it's anticipated that 2,200 Grays Harbor County residents will be left without health insurance coverage beginning January 1, 2018. Those who have Premera paid for by an employer will not see any insurance coverage changes.

"Although we don't anticipate that this reduction in healthcare coverage will have a significant impact on operations at Summit Pacific at this time, we will continue to monitor the situation," Josh Martin, CEO of Summit Pacific Medical Center shared. "We understand that this development will have a substantial affect on many individuals in our community. We will be looking at ways to offer immediate assistance for those impacted and will be working behind the scenes to address the bigger issues at play by discussing the importance of affordable health insurance options for our community to key government heads, various state organizations and insurance companies."

Summit Pacific currently has an insurance enrollment specialist on staff. This position can offer assistance to community members at no charge, looking to check their eligibility for a Medicaid plan (state insurance). “Often times, people don’t realize that they are eligible,” Kim Kelley, Insurance Enrollment Specialist shared, “Or they forget that they experienced a significant impact to their income such as going from a two income family to a one income family, or even the birth of a child can affect your eligibility.” Those interested in learning more or wanting to schedule an appointment with the enrollment specialist can call 360-346-2269.

For those not eligible for a Medicaid plan, there is a possible alternative option of coverage through Washington State’s high-risk insurance pool (WSHIP). However, this program is designed for those with highly complex and expensive health needs and premiums can be quite high with no subsidies available to assist. More information on WSHIP can be found here: <https://www.insurance.wa.gov/washington-state-health-insurance-pool-wship>.

According to CEO Martin, the community should be aware that Summit Pacific Medical Center will continue to provide healthcare to its patients regardless of their ability or inability to pay. “We have several programs in place to assist in making healthcare services affordable to those in our community, including our Community Care Financial Assistance program and our Property Tax Credit for those living within our hospital district boundaries.”

Summit Pacific also offers a Virtual Care Clinic that offers its services at a \$40 flat fee regardless if one has insurance or not. The Virtual Care Clinic is similar to an Urgent Care in that its providers are able to help treat non-emergent issues such as cold and flu symptoms, urinary tract infections, rashes, headaches, etc. Virtual care appointments can be set up by visiting Summit Pacific’s website or through the Summit Pacific Virtual Care app on your phone.

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Summit Pacific Medical Center passionately provides essential healthcare to all individuals of our community with an emphasis on quality, access and compassion. We are a Level IV Critical access Hospital with 24-hour emergency services. We also operate three rural healthcare clinics and an Urgent Care. To learn more about Summit Pacific Medical Center, visit <https://summitpacificmedicalcenter.org>.