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UT Research Center to Host

Tennessee **TODAY**
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Public Forum about Online Insurance Marketplace

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KNOXVILLE—As part of the new health care reform act passed by Congress last year, all states including Tennessee will soon be required to create “health insurance exchanges,” which are online websites where individuals and small businesses can compare and buy health insurance.

The University of Tennessee Center for Health Policy and Services Research, on Monday, November 14, will host a public forum to help the public understand this new requirement. The forum will also explore issues surrounding it and outline some alternatives to the state-based site.

The 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. event will be held at the East Tennessee Historical Society, 601 S. Gay St. The forum is free and open to the public. Free parking is available at the State Street, Market Square, and Locust Street garages and at street meters beginning at 6:00 p.m.

The event’s keynote speaker will be Brian Haile, director of the Insurance Exchange Planning initiative in the Tennessee Department of Finance and Administration. Participants will also hear from representatives of small businesses, brokers and underwriters, health care providers, and consumers and advocates. There will be a question and answer session.

The forum would give people a chance to discuss health reform in a non-partisan way and to “influence the development of Tennessee policy,” said Dr. Carole R. Myers, co-director of the Center for Health Policy and Services Research.

The event’s planning partners include Cherokee Health Systems, Health Care 21, Knoxville Association of Health Underwriters, Knoxville Chamber, Knox County Health Department, Summit Medical Group, Tennessee Health Care Campaign, and the UT College of Law.

The Affordable Care Act, passed last year, is mandating that by 2014, states must develop the health

insurance exchanges. The goal is to provide an easy shopping experience for consumers when it comes to health plans. The exchanges will also certify, rate, and regulate plans. Participating plans must meet certain minimum standards for benefits offered, quality, and consumer protections. If a state chooses not to create an exchange or fails to create one, the federal government will take over and create an exchange for that state.

The UT Center for Health Policy and Services Research is a multidisciplinary center that promotes community engagement and outreach on health policy issues of local, state, and national concern and supports research on health policy for the purpose of improving health outcomes. The center is committed to serving as an “honest broker” in convening community dialogues focused on health policy issues.

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