

The Bulletin

By [John Penney](#)

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December 05, 2015 1:14PM

Residents get help enrolling in health insurance at Norwich event

NORWICH — More than two dozen people were scheduled to stop in at Norwich United Community & Family Services office on Saturday to get help signing up for health insurance.

Inside the The Edward & Mary Lord Family Health Center on Town Street, health care workers and insurance brokers met with clients during the organization's annual Access Health CT Enrollment event, designed to guide new and renewing enrollees through the insurance application and selection process.

"We try to do one or two of these types of events during the open enrollment window every year," said Yolanda Bowes, the center's director of community outreach services. "A lot of people either don't have computers or just need help selecting a plan."

Open enrollment for Access Health CT, the state's health insurance exchange, runs through Jan. 31, though clients must sign up before Dec. 15 to have insurance in place for Jan. 1.

Penny Gale, one of several application specialists on-hand on Saturday, said clients come in with a variety of questions.

"There's sign-on issues with the website and the fact that some people don't have access to a computer," she said. "It can also be difficult to interpret the questions when you're doing it yourself online. You don't want to make a mistake and have your eligibility affected."

Rick Morin, of Morin Associates LLC in Groton, was one of two insurance brokers standing by to help.

"My job is to help people make their insurance selection and ensure a person's doctor is in the network they choose," he said. "The prices can be very different — a carrier might have the same plan with four different prices."

Norwich resident Laura Quidgeon decided to stop at the center instead of attempting to sign up on her own.

"I needed to see an actual person, someone to guide me," she said. "If I do it over the phone, I'm not sure I'll get the plan I need. You don't buy a car without talking to a real person face-to-face, so I'm not doing that with my insurance."



Lurena Clarke, an Access to Care specialist, helps Norwich resident Laura Quidgeon sign up for health insurance on Saturday during the Norwich United Community & Family Services' open enrollment event for Access Health CT.

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