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(S.D.)-Navigators Help Get Native American Insurance

By: Dennis and Kathi Brown Posted at: 10/20/2013 07:35 AM

SIOUX FALLS, South Dakota (AP) - Insurance enrollment helpers are encouraging Native Americans to sign up for coverage under the nation's new health care law.

Native Americans are exempt from the Affordable Care Act's requirement that people carry insurance.

But "navigators" tasked with helping people get insurance say the new law will give Native Americans better access to X-rays, mammograms, prescription drugs and trips to specialists not covered under Indian Health Service.

Great Plains Tribal Chairmen's Health Board executive director Jerilyn Church says there's a huge gap in access to services, so enrollment in the marketplace will make a big difference.

American Indian Health and Family Services executive director Ashley Tuomi says the Affordable Care Act will also help close gaps at urban health clinics, where a lack of resources limit services to general medical care.