



## **The Partnership hosts quarterly Healthcare Council, features the work of Enroll Gulf Coast**

The Partnership's Healthcare Council met on May 12 in the Partnership board room. Partnership Public Policy Manager Alicia Lee welcomed Donna Atkinson-Travis, Bureau Chief, Bureau of Human Services, Houston Department of Health and Human Services, as the Council speaker. Atkinson-Travis discussed the Enroll Gulf Coast collaborative efforts to enroll uninsured residents of greater Harris County in health insurance. Enroll Gulf Coast was created in 2013 to coordinate, network and streamline efforts to efficiently and effectively engage the diverse 13-county population of Greater Harris County in healthcare insurance plans available under the Affordable Care Act.

The Affordable Care Act was passed in March 2010 and provided for the Health Insurance Marketplace, a platform for consumers to "shop" for coverage by viewing various plans and enrolling in a health plan of their choice.

The highest proportions of uninsured adults are found in the Northline, Downtown-East End and Gulfton areas of greater Houston. Northline and Gulfton have the highest percentages of uninsured residents, multiple barriers to care, such as no primary care physician nor the ability to receive dental care, and fair or poor health. "The ultimate goal is to provide enrollment assistance and get more consumers enrolled in health coverage," said Atkinson-Travis.

Enroll Gulf Coast has implemented a variety of strategies to increase enrollment including community and grassroots outreach, providing health and financial literacy, and utilizing trained navigators to assist individuals in signing up for coverage. To succeed in outreach and enrollment efforts, "local government needs to understand the need to get involved," said Atkinson-Travis.

Looking forward, Enroll Gulf Coast will be preparing for open enrollment round three, applying for grants, and increasing outreach to faith-based and diverse community groups.