

“Hey, Doc”

Answers to Questions You Never Thought to Ask About the New Health Insurance Marketplace

FACT SHEET 2:

Nov. 25, 2014

Who Must Enroll? What If I Don't?

Who Must Enroll?

As of 2014, the individual mandate of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) requires most people to have some form of health insurance coverage, or pay a penalty. (See “[When Can I Sign Up?](#)”) If you have coverage in one or more of these ways, you will satisfy the mandate:

- Government-sponsored insurance (such as Medicare, Medicaid, the Children’s Health Insurance Program, TRICARE, the veterans health program);
- Employer-sponsored coverage;
- Insurance bought on your own in or outside of the marketplace that meets the new ACA requirements; or
- A “grandfathered” health plan: A health plan in existence before the health reform law (March 23, 2010) that is exempt from some of the new ACA requirements.

The Obama administration has also said that if your insurer renewed an old policy that doesn’t meet the new ACA requirements, that might still satisfy the mandate for 2015. Check with your insurance company.

If you do not have coverage, the marketplace is a place to shop for health insurance in addition to the traditional private insurance market. The

marketplace also can help you determine if you can get financial assistance toward your insurance costs or if you are eligible for a state government health program.

Additionally, the ACA says certain uninsured people don’t have to pay the penalty. Generally, you may qualify for an exception if:

- Coverage is unaffordable based on your household income;
- You don’t earn enough income to have to file a tax return;
- You are uninsured for less than three months in a row;
- You are in one of the following groups: incarcerated individuals, undocumented immigrants, American Indians and Alaska natives, participants of a health care sharing ministry, or members of a recognized religious sect opposed to having health insurance; or
- You experience certain hardships preventing you from obtaining coverage.

If you don’t qualify for one of the exemptions, and you don’t have insurance coverage, you will have to pay a penalty, which increases each year. (See “[What Are the Penalties for Not Having Health Insurance?](#)”)

NEW: What Are the Penalties for Not Having Health Insurance?

If you didn't have insurance in 2014, and you didn't qualify for one of the exemptions (see "Who Must Enroll?"), you will have to pay a penalty when you file your taxes at the end of the year. The penalties increase each year.

For 2014, you will pay either \$95 per adult and \$4750 per child, or 1 percent of your family income, whichever is greater.

In 2015, the fines begin at \$325 per adult and \$162.50 per child, or 2 percent of your family income, whichever is greater.

In 2016, the fines increase to as much as \$695 per adult and \$347 per child, or 2.5 percent of family income, whichever is greater.

After 2016, the penalties will be adjusted based on inflation.

What If I Have Insurance Through My Work or Family? Do I Have to Give That Up and Buy Insurance Through the Marketplace?

Not necessarily. Generally, if you already have health insurance, you satisfy the ACA's requirement to have coverage. But there are a few things you may want to look into.

Check with your employer to make sure it will continue providing coverage.

Check the status of your current plan to make sure it meets the new minimum requirements under the ACA.

If you have your own insurance or a job-based plan that was "grandfathered in" because it existed before the health reform law was enacted in 2010, it is exempt from some of the new requirements under the ACA. It could be that nothing needs to change, but check with your insurance company or employer to find out.

Children under the age of 26 can stay on their parents' plan.

If you already have coverage, you can still look at your options in the marketplace, but you may not qualify for financial assistance.

NEW: What Happens If My Insurance Company Canceled My Plan? Can I Still Keep It?

No. If your insurance company decided to cancel your insurance plan, you have a few options to find something else.

- You can shop for and buy a new plan either in or outside of the marketplace.
- You can buy a plan that your insurance company is offering instead of the old one.
- Your insurance company might make changes to your old plan instead of completely canceling it, and give you the chance to renew.
- In some cases, if your plan is canceled, you might be able to temporarily buy a catastrophic plan if you can't afford anything else.

Just be sure that in each of these cases, you review what your plan covers, any price changes, and whether you can keep your current doctor.



Physicians Caring for Texans