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HHS Office of Intergovernmental and External Affairs

News Bulletin: Friday, March 14, 2014

Visit HHS.gov/Healthcare and CuidadodeSalud.Gov, two consumer-focused health care websites to: [find insurance options](#), [compare care quality](#), [and learn about the law](#). How is the Affordable Care Act helping you? Share your story [here](#).

Affordable Care Act News

✧ March 14, 2014

Frequently Asked Question on Coverage of Same-Sex Spouses

Final regulations implementing section 2702 of the Public Health Service Act (PHS Act). 1 Section 2702 of the PHS Act requires health insurance issuers offering non-grandfathered health insurance coverage in the group or individual markets (including qualified health plans offered through Affordable Insurance Exchanges or "Exchanges"²) to guarantee the availability of coverage unless one or more exceptions applies. The preamble to the final regulations (78 FR at 13417) indicates that discriminatory marketing practices or benefit designs represent a failure by health insurance issuers to comply with the guaranteed availability requirements, and the final regulations at 45 CFR 147.104(e) establish certain marketing and nondiscrimination standards in the regulation text. The following serves to clarify the meaning of the terms used in 45 CFR 147.104(e) for the purposes of describing the requirements health insurance issuers must meet to ensure guaranteed availability of coverage. Read the Same-Sex Spouses FAQ [here](#)

✧ March 14, 2014

Tax Tips for Same-Sex Married couples: The following questions and answers provide information to individuals of the same sex who are lawfully married (same-sex spouses). These questions and answers reflect the holdings in Revenue Ruling 2013-17 in 2013-38 IRB 201. You can read tax tips for same-sex married couples [here](#).

✧ March 11, 2014

Enrollment in the Health Insurance Marketplace continued to rise in February to a five-month total of 4.2 million. As in January, the percent of young adults who selected a Marketplace plan was 3 percentage points higher than it was from October through December (27 percent versus 24 percent). Based on enrollment patterns in other health care programs, it is expected that more people will sign up as we get closer to the March 31st deadline. Read the report [here](#).

State-level tables highlighting enrollment-related information for the Marketplace are available [here](#).

✧ March 10, 2014

Request for Information Regarding Provider Non-Discrimination. This document is a request for information regarding provider non-discrimination. The Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services (HHS), and the Treasury (collectively, the Departments) invite public comments via this request for information. Section 2706(a) of the Public Health Service Act (PHS Act) 1, as added by section 1201 of the Affordable Care Act, states that a "group health plan and a health insurance issuer offering group or individual health insurance coverage shall not discriminate with respect to participation under the plan or coverage against any health care provider who is acting within the scope of that provider's license or certification under applicable state law." You can read more about the background on this request for information as well as the multiple ways you can submit comments [here](#).

✧ **March 7, 2014**

CMS' Center for Consumer Information and Insurance Oversight (CCIIO) unveiled a [167-page blueprint](#) laying out its approval process for states seeking to alter their exchange configurations for 2015. The agency stresses that states continue to have flexibility in setting up their exchanges, noting that they could do a full state-based exchange, operate only the small businesses (SHOP) market, enter into a partnership with the federal government or rely on the federal government to administer the exchange -- in which case no blueprint would be necessary. You can find the blueprint [here](#).

Health Care Blog Posts

✧ **March 14, 2014**

The Department of Health and Human Services took one more step toward making health care coverage more accessible and equitable for married same-sex couples. Starting next year, if an insurance company offers coverage to opposite-sex spouses, it cannot choose to deny that coverage to same-sex spouses. In other words, insurance companies will not be permitted to discriminate against married same-sex couples when offering coverage. This will further enhance access to health care for all Americans, including those with same-sex spouses. Read the full article [here](#).

✧ **March 14, 2014**

Shelley Davis, a single mother, couldn't afford health insurance for her or her son. According to her, she felt "felt like [she] spent every day walking on eggshells, scared of what was around each corner". Now, she has an affordable plan that lets her breathe easy and feel safer. Read her story [here](#).

✧ **March 13, 2014**

With less than 20 days left of open enrollment, we are ready to help you find quality, affordable coverage on the Health Insurance Marketplace. If you still have questions, learn about the various ways we can help you enroll. Read more [here](#).

✧ **March 13, 2014**

Like everyone, Kathryn – a self-proclaimed "young invincible"– felt the stress of not having medical insurance. For her, "signing up for health insurance was more important than ever". Read her story [here](#).

✧ **March 12, 2014**

After being uninsured for three years, she was able to enroll for only \$18 a month. "The Affordable Care Act has brought me security to know I can get medical attention when I need to, without saving up money or worrying about how the cost will hurt my family." Read more about her [here](#).

✧ **March 11, 2014**

More Americans every day are finding quality, affordable coverage on the Health Insurance Marketplace. At the end of February, enrollment in the Marketplace reached 4.2 million. These numbers demonstrate that our outreach is helping to make a difference – with millions of Americans now enjoying the peace of mind that comes with new coverage. Read more [here](#).

✧ **March 11, 2014**

As a contractor, Shellie Braggs didn't get health insurance through her employer and couldn't afford the \$500

premium leaving her feeling helpless. Through the Marketplace she found a plan that she could afford and now enjoys the relief and security that being covered can bring. Read the full story [here](#).

✳ **March 11, 2014**

No matter what state you live in, you'll be able to use the Health Insurance Marketplace to apply for health coverage. Learn about how you can compare plans and get lower costs where you live by reading [here](#).

✳ **March 10, 2014**

According to Rachel, at just \$7 a month, her coverage is "out of this world affordable". For Rachel, getting covered through the HealthCare.gov "was quick and easy." Read her story [here](#).

✳ **March 10, 2014**

See what you can save in the Health Insurance Marketplace by comparing plans and costs. Read [here](#) to see quality and affordable health insurance plan options.

White House Health Care Blog Posts

✳ **March 14, 2014**

"Seriously, Do You Want Your Mother to Have a Nervous Breakdown?" Listen to These Moms Share Why You Should Get Covered [here](#).

✳ **March 14, 2014**

President Obama sat down for an interview with WebMD to answer questions submitted by consumers and discuss the importance of signing up for health insurance by March 31. The President discussed health care costs, access to care, Medicaid expansion, and more during the interview with the site's health care reform expert Liza Zamosky. You can watch the video and read the article [here](#).

✳ **March 14, 2014**

The First Lady encourages military families to get covered at a Department of Veterans Affairs Google+ Hangout. Read this blog, posted by Kasie Coccaro [here](#).

✳ **March 14, 2014**

The US Department of Health and Human Services took one more step toward making health care coverage more accessible and equitable for married same-sex couples. Starting next year, if an insurance company offers coverage to opposite-sex spouses, it cannot choose to deny that coverage to same-sex spouses. In other words, insurance companies will not be permitted to discriminate against married same-sex couples when offering coverage. This will further enhance access to health care for all Americans, including those with same-sex spouses. This blog was cross posted from The Department of Health and Human Services' health care blog and is available [here](#).

✳ **March 11, 2014**

LeBron James wants you to #GetCovered. Read his message about the importance of having health insurance [here](#).

✳ **March 11, 2014**

President Obama sat down with Zach Galifianakis on his show "Between Two Ferns with Zach Galifianakis" to talk about health care, among other things. Watch the interview [here](#).

✳ **March 11, 2014**

#GeeksGetCovered. America is full of geeks—and that's a really good thing. Geeks are a critical driver of America's innovation ecosystem, from the entrepreneurs launching startups in Silicon Valley to the scientists experimenting in university research labs to the whiz kids building gadgets in their parents' garages. Read and view a message from the geeks at the White House about getting health coverage [here](#).

✳ **March 11, 2014**

With only weeks left in the open enrollment period, [here](#) are 20 reasons why you should enroll.

✱ **March 10, 2014**

Senior Advisor to the President Valerie Jarrett joined the editors of Cosmopolitan & Cosmo for Latinos in a live Google+ Hangout to highlight key components of the Affordable Care Act and to discuss the various ways the public can get health coverage that is of high quality and affordable. Read more [here](#).

Educational Materials

Below you'll find materials related to the implementation of the Affordable Care Act.

Info-Graphics

View all our **Flickr Info-Graphs** page [here](#).

How Obamacare Prices Shake Out: <http://m.huffpost.com/us/entry/3990491/>

Public Service Announcement/Address

Health Insurance Marketplace

For more information about the Health Insurance Marketplace including official resources, research, news, and events visit <http://marketplace.cms.gov/>

Marketplace Updates

For information on how to sign up for coverage through the Health Insurance Marketplace, including text message and email updates visit <http://www.healthcare.gov/marketplace/index.html>

State by State Fact Sheets

Choose your state to learn more about the immediate benefits of the Affordable Care Act, <http://www.healthcare.gov/law/information-for-you/index.html>