



Know the Facts

The Affordable Care Act Is Working in Iowa

December 10, 2014

With a new open enrollment period upon us, here are the facts about how health care reform is working in Iowa. The insurance marketplace is here to stay, and people will continue to have access to quality plans and financial assistance through the Affordable Care Act, or ACA. As more and more people obtain coverage through the ACA, they will gain a better understanding of what the law means for them. A recent Gallup poll found that the majority of Americans who purchased new health insurance policies through the ACA marketplace over the past year are as satisfied as other Americans with their health insurance: 71 percent rated their coverage “excellent” or “good,” compared with 72 percent among all those who have coverage.¹

Last year, more than 125,000 Iowans obtained health insurance thanks to the ACA.² Among those, an overwhelming majority qualified for financial assistance to help cover the cost of care.³ Whether you are thinking of signing up for health insurance or have already purchased coverage on the marketplace, shopping around during this year’s open enrollment period could mean big savings.

Iowa by the numbers

Who has benefited

- **29,163 Iowans signed up for health care through the federal exchange.** During last year’s open enrollment period, about 29,163 people—nearly half of all eligible Iowans—signed up for health insurance on the federal exchange.⁴
- **More than 8 in 10 Iowans qualified for tax credits that, on average, made plans 69 percent cheaper.** Eighty-three percent of Iowans who signed up for a plan received tax credits to make their insurance more affordable. Tax credits lowered the cost of the average plan from \$350 to \$108, a 69 percent decrease.⁵

The deadlines to sign up are approaching

To re-enroll in different coverage or enroll in new coverage beginning January 1, the deadline to sign up is **December 15, 2014.**

The final deadline to sign up for health coverage in 2015 is **February 15, 2015.**

- **100,000 Iowans signed up for Iowa's new Medicaid program.** Iowa's Medicaid program, the Iowa Health and Wellness Plan, accepted federal funding to extend health insurance to nearly 100,000 Iowans who otherwise would not have been able to afford care.⁶
- **Iowa hospitals saved \$32.5 million, or almost 20 percent, on charity care thanks to Medicaid expansion.** Thanks to thousands of Iowans having new insurance coverage, Iowa hospitals spent nearly 20 percent less on charity care during the first half of 2014 than they did during the first half of 2013, saving \$32.5 million.⁷
- **Expanding Medicaid will bring Iowa \$273 million in economic growth.** Because Iowa accepted federal funding to expand Medicaid in 2014, the state will see its economy grow by an estimated \$273 million over the next two years.⁸

Who can still benefit

- **In Iowa, 10.3 percent of residents are still uninsured.** Despite the success of the ACA in allowing thousands of Iowans to sign up for health coverage, 10.3 percent of the state still lacks insurance.⁹
- **Choosing lower-cost premium plans could result in savings of \$2 billion.** If everyone nationwide who previously signed up in the marketplace switched to the lowest-cost premium plan in the same metal tier—silver, for example—their combined actions would create \$2 billion in savings for consumers and taxpayers.¹⁰
- **Financial assistance is available, and you could pay as little as \$144 per month for coverage.** A 40-year-old nonsmoker who earns \$30,000 annually in Iowa can find a bronze plan that costs \$144 per month once tax credits are factored in and a silver plan that costs \$208 per month.¹¹

Need help?

Go to www.HealthCare.gov to start the application process.

If you need assistance, you can get free, in-person help from an expert in your community to guide you through the process. Go to localhelp.healthcare.gov to find assistance near you.

You can sign up over the phone by calling 1.800.318.2596.

Endnotes

- 1 Frank Newport, "Newly Insured Through Exchanges Give Coverage Good Marks," Gallup, November 14, 2014, available at <http://www.gallup.com/poll/179396/newly-insured-exchanges-give-coverage-good-marks.aspx>.
- 2 Kaiser Family Foundation, "State Marketplace Statistics," available at <http://kff.org/health-reform/state-indicator/state-marketplace-statistics/> (last accessed November 2014); Tony Leys, "Report: 230,000 Iowans still lack health care," *The Des Moines Register*, May 19, 2014, available at <http://www.desmoinesregister.com/story/news/health/2014/05/19/iowans-lack-health-insurance/9270235/>.
- 3 Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, *Premium Affordability, Competition, and Choice in the Health Insurance Marketplace, 2014* (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2014), p. 23, available at <http://aspe.hhs.gov/health/reports/2014/Premiums/2014MktPlacePremBrf.pdf#page=23>.
- 4 Kaiser Family Foundation, "State Marketplace Statistics."
- 5 Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, *Premium Affordability, Competition, and Choice in the Health Insurance Marketplace*.
- 6 Leys, "Report: 230,000 Iowans still lack health care."
- 7 Ibid.
- 8 Families USA, "Iowa's Economy Will Benefit from Expanding Medicaid" (2013), available at http://familiesusa.org/sites/default/files/product_documents/IA-and-Medicaid-Expansion.pdf.
- 9 Dan Witters, "Arkansas, Kentucky Report Sharpest Drops in Uninsured Rate," Gallup, August 5, 2014, available at <http://www.gallup.com/poll/174290/arkansas-kentucky-report-sharpest-drops-uninsured-rate.aspx>.
- 10 Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, *Health Plan Choice and Premiums in the 2015 Health Insurance Marketplace*, p. 2.
- 11 Cynthia Cox and others, "Analysis of 2015 Premium Changes in the Affordable Care Act's Health Insurance Marketplaces" (Menlo Park, CA: Kaiser Family Foundation, 2014), available at <http://kff.org/health-reform/issue-brief/analysis-of-2015-premium-changes-in-the-affordable-care-acts-health-insurance-marketplaces/>.