

The Affordable Care Act Helps Young Adults

For too long, too many hard working Americans paid the price for policies that handed free rein to insurance companies and put barriers between patients and their doctors. The Affordable Care Act gives hard-working families the security they deserve. The new health care law forces insurance companies to play by the rules, prohibiting them from dropping your coverage if you get sick, billing you into bankruptcy because of an annual or lifetime limit, or, soon, discriminating against anyone with a pre-existing condition. And it includes substantial new benefits and freedoms for young adults across the country.

Prior to the passage of the law young adults often faced barriers to accessing and maintaining affordable health insurance, and often went without the care they needed. Before reform:

- 42% of young adults either lost or switched coverage once they graduated from school—46% of which were uninsured for two or more years.
- 76% of young adults who were uninsured reported not getting needed care because of cost.
- 11.3 million young adults, both uninsured and insured, who were surveyed said they were paying off medical bills—31% of whom delayed education or career plans because of them and nearly 40% of whom said they could not meet other debt obligations, such as students loans.

Under the new health care law, Americans will have the security of knowing that they don't have to worry about losing coverage if they're laid off or change jobs. And insurance companies now have to cover your preventive care like mammograms and other cancer screenings. The new law also makes a significant investment in State and community-based efforts that promote public health, prevent disease and protect against public health emergencies.

Health reform is already making a difference by:

Providing New Coverage for Young Adults

Insurance companies are now required to allow parents to keep their children up to age 26 on their insurance plans. This means that over 2.5 million young adults have gained coverage because of the new health care law.

Covering Preventive Services with No Deductible or Co-pay

Under the new health care law, all Americans joining a new health care plan must be able to receive recommended preventive services, such as mammograms or vaccinations for your child, with no out-of-pocket costs such as co-pays or deductibles. Already, 54 million Americans now have coverage for preventive services without additional cost sharing.

Providing Better Value for Your Premium Dollar Through The 80/20 Rule

Under the new health care law, insurance companies must provide consumers greater value by spending generally at least 80 percent of premium dollars on health care and quality improvements instead of overhead, executive salaries or marketing. If they don't, they must provide consumers a rebate or reduce premiums.

Scrutinizing Unreasonable Premium Increases

In every State and for the first time ever, insurance companies are required to publicly justify their actions if they want to raise rates by 10 percent or more. And an increasing number of States have more power to block unreasonable premium increases from taking effect.

Removing Limits on Health Benefits

The law bans insurance companies from imposing lifetime dollar limits on health benefits – freeing cancer patients and individuals suffering from other chronic diseases from having to worry about going without treatment because of their lifetime limits. Already, over 16 million young adults are free from worrying about lifetime limits on coverage thanks to the new health care law. The new law also restricts the use of annual limits, including on student health plans, and bans them completely in 2014.

Creating New Coverage Options for Individuals with Pre-existing Conditions

Under the new law, insurance companies are already banned from denying coverage to children because of a pre-existing condition. In 2014, they are banned from discriminating against anyone with a pre-existing condition such as cancer and having been pregnant. The new Pre-Existing Condition Insurance Plan in every State offers an option to people who have been locked out of the insurance market because of a pre-existing condition like cancer or heart disease. Already, more than 50,000 uninsured Americans with pre-existing conditions have received coverage through the Pre-Existing Condition Insurance Plan.

Protecting Patients' Choice of Doctor

Under the new health care law, young adults joining new insurance plans have the freedom to choose from any primary care provider and OB-GYN in their health plan's network, without a referral. And student health plans, for the first time, will be covered by these important consumer protections.

Providing Health Care Workforce Opportunities from Young Adults

The law includes new resources that would have boosted the number of doctors, nurses and health care providers in communities where they are needed most. These resources included grants, scholarships, loan repayment programs, as well as boosted support for educational institutions that provide training for a range of health care careers.

Decreasing Costs and Increasing Coverage to Millions of Young Adults

Affordable Insurance Exchanges are one-stop marketplaces where consumers can choose a private health insurance plan that fits their health needs. Starting in 2014, they will offer to the public the same kinds of insurance choices members of Congress will have. The new health care law also provides middle class tax credits to families to help pay for private health insurance. And it expands the Medicaid program to families of four with incomes of up to \$29,000. The new Exchanges, tax credits and Medicaid expansion will result in 32 million more insured Americans, including as many as 10 million young adults.

Decreasing Costs for Small Businesses

Tax credits for small businesses included in the Affordable Care Act will benefit an estimated two million workers who get their insurance from an estimated 360,000 small employers who will receive the credit in 2011. In 2014, small business owners will get more relief with tax credits and affordable insurance choices in the new Affordable Insurance Exchanges in every State. For the first time, they will have a marketplace where they can see and compare their health plan options in one place, and insurers will have to actively compete for their business.