



July 1st Changes in Ohio Law Good News for Young Adults



Nearly a year after Governor Ted Strickland signed Ohio House Bill 1, young adults will start seeing the benefits of an expanded age limit for coverage on their family's health

insurance package. It is expected that up to 20,000 young adults will get coverage. The Ohio law becomes effective July 1, and requires insurers, Multiple Employers Welfare Arrangements (MEWAs), health insuring corporations, and public employee benefit plans to extend the coverage cutoff for children (young adults) on family policies to age 28. The new Ohio law only applies to unmarried young adults, and also doesn't apply if the young adult has an offer of insurance through his employer or is eligible for Medicaid or Medicare. The young adult does not need to live with his parents, but must be a resident of Ohio or a full-time student at an accredited public or private institution of higher education. The young adult does not have to have been continuously covered.

Many people are aware that under the new *federal* health care reform law, young adults can be covered on family policies until the age of 26. Ohio's law will provide an important benefit to young adults between age 26 and 28. Federal law does not apply until new plan years begin after September 23. The Ohio law will be important for those caught in the gap. We have put together [a chart showing how the state and federal law compare](#).

OCHC will hold a press conference on June 30, 2010 to highlight this important change in Ohio law.

To apply any of this information to your own situation, seek help from your insurance agent or look at the [Ohio Department of Insurance website](#).

[FAQs – Health Care Reform Provisions: Impact on Ohio Insurance Consumers Revised March 16, 2010](#)

[Frequently Asked Questions State and Federal Coverage Expansion For Older Age Children May 18, 2010](#)

[Kaiser Family Foundation](#)

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Federal Health Care Reform

What Part of Health Care Reform Goes Into Effect This Year?

Is your son or daughter graduating from college? Did your health insurer refuse to cover your youngest child who has asthma? Have you hit the Medicare "donut hole?" If you answered "yes" to any of these questions there is probably something in health care reform that will positively impact you this year.

What are the key elements of health care reform that will happen in 2010?

Insurance Coverage Changes

Children with special health care needs will be able to get insurance that will cover necessary treatment of their illnesses

Insurance companies cannot impose a lifetime cap on benefits.

- Insurance companies will be required to cover young adults on their family's policy up to age 26, even if they are married and don't live with their parents. (Exceptions for young people with employer based offer of coverage in certain circumstances).
- Insurance companies must spend at least 80% of premium dollars on health claims, not profits and administration.
 - New private insurance plans will have to cover preventive services - such as screenings and tests - with no co-payments.



and see a 7% discount on generic drugs.

Help for Small Business

Small businesses (up to 25 employees, with cap on average wages) can get a tax credit for providing health insurance to their employees.

Help for Persons with Chronic Health Conditions

An interim high risk pool will provide immediate access to insurance for people who have not been able to get coverage because of a pre-existing condition.

Help for Those Without Health Coverage

- New rules for non-profit hospitals will require greater accountability for charitable care.

Help for Seniors

Medicare beneficiaries with prescription drugs costs exceeding the amount Medicare pays (putting them in the "donut hole") will receive a check for \$250 from the federal government. Starting in 2011 beneficiaries in the donut hole will pay 50% of brand name price



- Community health centers will begin seeing additional funds to expand capacity.
- Consumer assistance will help consumers navigate the health care system.

Sources include http://www.communitycatalyst.org/doc_store/publications/Quick_Wins.pdf

What We've Been Doing

Training on Health Care Reform

- Multiple activities in the Spring thanking Ohio's delegation who voted for health care reform.
- May 18, 2010 – Central Ohio OCHC Training on Health Care Reform held – 12 people trained.
- June 8, 2010 – Southwest Ohio OCHC Training on Health Care Reform – 15 people trained.
- June 15, 2010 – Canton, Ohio Training on Health Care Reform.
- Health Care Reform Implementation Summit conducted with Community Catalyst – 60 attended from Akron, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Columbus, Rio Grande, and Toledo

Implementing Federal Health Care Reform in Ohio

Getting Ready for the High Risk Pool in Ohio?

Like other states, Ohio's first order of business in health care reform implementation is getting the "High Risk Pool" (HRP) underway. A HRP is a structure through which people who can't buy health insurance in the individual health care market due to pre-existing medical conditions, can still get covered. Ohio has never had a HRP, but has instead

had a program called "Open Enrollment." Under Open Enrollment, Ohio health insurers are required to offer coverage to a limited number of people regardless of pre-existing medical conditions. The program has been and remains too expensive for many Ohioans. However, last year's state budget lowered the cap on those premiums, to be phased in between 2010 and 2012.

The High Risk Pool was President Obama's promise to the nation made during his September 2009 speech to Congress, in order to offer some protection to persons frozen out of the insurance market. The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act requires the federal government to initiate the High Risk Pool process then gives states the option of running their own HRP, or allowing the federal government to do it. Ohio plans to run an HRP by competitively selecting a non-profit insurance company to do it. Latest estimates are that it could be the Fall before the HRP is up and running in Ohio. . Federal subsidies can only go to persons uninsured for 6 months before coming into the HRP.

Ohio Consumers for Health Coverage will be monitoring this situation to speak up on behalf of

Upcoming Events

Central Ohio OCHC

Sat. June 26,- Community Conversation on Health Care Reform 10-11:30 am. Dixon United Methodist Church (1691 Infirmery Road, Dayton Ohio 45418)

Wed. June 30 –Press Event 10a.m.
Statehouse Ladies Gallery

Wed. June 30 - Community Conversation on Health Care Reform 7:00-9:00 pm. Co-hosted by the League of Women Voters of Delaware County. Location: William Street United Methodist Church (28 West William Street, Delaware Ohio)

South West OCHC

Tues. July 13 - SWOCHC Monthly Meeting
2:30 – 4:00p.m. Rookwood Tower – Cincinnati, OH

anxious consumers who have gone without help for too long. You may share your story about trying to find health coverage while having a pre-existing condition by going to <http://www.ohioconsumersforhealth.org/tell-your-story/>



Keep this work moving forward!

[Ohio Consumers For Health Coverage is available for speaking to your group about health care reform!](#)

Advocate Spotlight

It's no secret our advocates are a large part of our success in the fight for accessible, high quality, affordable health care for all Ohioans. Ohio Consumers for Health Coverage would like to thank this issue's Featured Advocate, **Janice Alvarado** from the Cincinnati area.

She has been involved with OCHC from the very start and its predecessor, the Coalition for Affordable Health Care. **“My conviction is that everyone is entitled to health care”** says Janice and that conviction keeps her going even though the health care reform process can be frustrating.

The best part of the health care reform process for her is “making a difference by passing on information to others. After an event I organized, one lady told me she now had the information to discuss health reform intelligently.”

When asked what she would like to see happen in the future to continue to improve our health care delivery system she answered **“I would like to see expansion of our community health centers. The federal government has already allocated funds to Federally Qualified Health Centers. Besides that, we need more incentives for physicians and dentist to work in the health centers.”**

Thanks again Janice Alvarado for all you’ve done and for all that you continue to do.



Great Links

[UHCAN Ohio](#)
[Community Catalyst](#)
[Families USA](#)
[AARP – Ohio](#)
[OCHC Facebook Page](#)
[SWOCHC Facebook Page](#)



A coalition uniting the consumer voice for high quality, affordable health care for all Ohioans.

We've Moved!

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