

Practical Guide to the Affordable Care Act **Highlights of the new law**

The Affordable Care Act (ACA) – commonly known as Obama Care – is very long and complicated but need not be intimidating. To help you understand its many provisions, each monthly bulletin in 2013 will focus on some aspect of the ACA. This issue highlights some of the general provisions.

- This law affects all U.S. citizens and legal residents.
- Low-income individuals/families may receive some subsidy from the government for their health insurance.
- If an insurer makes too big a profit or spends too much on administrative costs, it will have to return some premium money through rebates.
- The ACA waives certain Medicare deductibles for screenings and authorizes personalized preventative plans.
- People on Medicare because they are over 65 or disabled will get more help with their drug costs.
- Children can stay on their parents' policies up to age 26.
- Some small businesses will get tax breaks to help pay for the health insurance of their workers.
- No more lifetime limits on health coverage.
- No more rejecting children for pre-existing conditions.
- A temporary, high-risk pool is a new option for those who were previously rejected and uninsurable.
- Starting January 1, 2014, those without insurance will be required to pay a penalty. The penalty is graduated and determined by one's length without coverage.
- In 2014, state-based Insurance Exchanges will provide a "one-stop shop" for individuals to purchase insurance.

Kaiser Family Foundation (kff.org) is the source for the above information. Other helpful resources: Campaign for Better Health Care (cbhconline.org), Illinois Maternal & Child Health Coalition (ilmaternal.org) and for suburban Cook County, AgeOptions (ageoptions.org).



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