



The Health Insurance Marketplace Launches Making Health Insurance Widely Available

As of October 1, 2013, millions of Americans and small businesses in every state can shop for personalized health coverage through the ObamaCare Health Insurance Exchange (HIX). As part of the Affordable Care Act (ACA), the HIX was launched as an online marketplace where consumers can shop and compare rates for health insurance policies from different carriers. The marketplace and the impending Medicaid expansions aim to expand health coverage to 29 million uninsured Americans within ten years and allow even more to lower their health care costs.

Open enrollment through the HIX runs from Oct 1, 2013 – March 31, 2014, and is available by visiting Healthcare.gov and Cuicadodesalud.gov. The insurance will go into effect as early as January 1, 2014. The different plans offered have varying levels of deductibles and benefits aimed at providing affordable options for health insurance enrollees. In many instances, tax credits or subsidies are available for potential consumers, and age, geography and smoker/non-smoker status can affect a plan's cost.

Under the ACA, participants cannot be denied for pre-existing conditions and they do not have to wait for any extended periods of time to enroll. There are no lifetime caps on health care benefits and adult children are allowed to stay on their parents' plans until age 26, among several major changes to previous health insurance policies.

There are penalties for those who do not sign up for health insurance. If you're uninsured for three months or more in 2014, you'll pay a penalty of \$95 per adult and \$47.50 per child (up to \$285 per family) or the greater of one percent of taxable income.

The web site addresses situations for individuals and families, employers, employees, and agents and brokers. The site features FAQs and assistance is available via live chat, or 24 hours a day, 7 days a week at 1.800.318.2596, with responders who can answer any questions you have. For more information click [here](#).

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