

Affordable Care Act Fact Sheet

Key Dates for Health Insurance Coverage – Enrollment and Penalties

The Affordable Care Act (ACA) provides new options to enroll in a high quality, affordable health plans. If you are considering purchasing health insurance through the Marketplace, below are some key dates to keep in mind.

Definition: Throughout this fact sheet we include the term *Open Enrollment*. Open enrollment is the time period when those who are eligible to enroll can enroll in a private health plan through the Marketplace.

Go to www.healthcare.gov or call the Marketplace at 1-800-318-2596 to enroll or learn more. To find local in-person help call 211.

Exceptions to Open Enrollment:

- You can apply for and enroll in Medicaid or BadgerCare at any time.
- If you experience a *qualifying life event* (get married, change jobs, bring a child into your home, etc.) you may be able to enroll in a new plan or change plans outside of the open enrollment period. You will have 60 days to enroll.

Key Dates for the Marketplace

- **September - November 2, 2014:** Special Enrollment Period for consumers who lost BadgerCare Plus coverage in 2014 due to recent eligibility changes.
- **November 15, 2014:** Open enrollment period starts – Enroll for the first time or change health plans for coverage in 2015 through the Marketplace.
- **December 15, 2014:** To have health coverage starting **January 1, 2015**, you must enroll through the Marketplace by December 15.
- **January 1, 2015:** For consumers who enrolled in a health plan during 2014 but do not manually go back in to re-enroll or go through the determination process, the Marketplace will automatically renew their health plan (also called **Auto Enrollment**). Most people will be re-enrolled in the same plan they had in 2014 and will receive the same tax credit or cost-sharing reduction.
- **February 15, 2015:** Marketplace open enrollment ends. Unless you experience a qualifying life event you will need to wait until November 2015 to enroll in a Marketplace plan.

The Tax Penalty and Important Dates

The Affordable Care Act requires that everyone have insurance coverage (also called minimum essential coverage) starting in **2014**. Most individuals and families will pay a penalty if they are uninsured during the year. If you're uninsured for just part of the year, 1/12 of the yearly penalty applies to each month you're uninsured. ***Please note: If you're uninsured for less than 3 months, you don't have to make a payment.***

Important Dates to Avoid a Tax Penalty

- **March 31, 2014:** The last day to buy insurance to avoid paying a penalty on your 2014 tax return for lack of coverage. If you sign up by March 31 you will be considered covered for the entire year.
- **January 1, 2015 (and on Jan. 1 of each year):** The last day to enroll in an insurance plan or maintain your current employer sponsored plan or Medicare or Medicaid coverage in order to avoid paying a penalty in 2015.

What Do I Owe If I Don't Have Insurance Coverage?

If you or your family members did not have insurance coverage considered to be the minimum essential coverage by **March 31, 2014** you will be responsible for paying a fee – *a penalty* – which will be due when you complete your 2014 federal income tax return. The penalty in 2014 is calculated one of 2 ways. You'll pay whichever of these amounts is higher:

- **1% of your yearly household income.** The maximum penalty is the national average yearly premium for a bronze plan or
- **\$95 per person for the year (\$47.50 per child under 18).** The maximum penalty per family using this method is \$285.

The fee increases every year. In 2015 it's 2% of income or \$325 per person. In 2016 and later years it's 2.5% of income or \$695 per person. After that it is adjusted for inflation.

You can learn more about the penalty by going to the Internal Revenue Service website - <http://www.irs.gov/uac/Questions-and-Answers-on-the-Individual-Shared-Responsibility-Provision>

If you have questions or need help accessing resources or services contact your Regional Center for Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs. To find the Regional Center closest to you call **1.800.642.7837**.