

Health Care Reform and You - What's Ahead?

Healthcare reform – The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act – is now the law. Most of the changes included in the new law won't take effect for several years, but a few things will change later this year. This article explains what changes this year and what changes are ahead in the future.

In New York, Vermont and New Hampshire most of the major consumer reforms included in the bill like community rating, guaranteed issue and prohibitions on rescinding coverage due to illness, are already in place under existing state laws. That means less will change for you than for people living in other parts of the country where state insurance laws are different because you've had these important consumer protections right along.

A few things will change for plan years beginning on or after September 23, 2010 and MVP Health Care is working now to make sure your coverage complies with the new law:

- Lifetime dollar limits on essential health benefits will be eliminated (Please note that the Federal government has not yet determined what benefits are considered essential)
- Children can stay on their parent's policies through age 26
- Any limitations based on pre-existing conditions for children to age 19 will be eliminated

MVP Health Care is committed to implementing the provisions of the health care reform law. A lot of work remains to be done to enact these changes. The Federal government will be writing regulations based on the new law. The states will be involved as well.

As we have more specific information about how your specific benefit plan may change, we will send you a letter that spells out the changes and tells you what, if anything, you need to do.

Looking ahead to 2014 there will be more ways for people to buy health insurance, including from your employer. Individuals who can't get insurance through their employer will also be able to buy health insurance through state-sponsored exchanges similar to the Massachusetts Health Care Connector. There will be subsidies available from the federal government to help people who meet certain income requirements buy health insurance through the exchanges. There will also be penalties charged through income tax filings for people who don't buy health insurance.

There are still a lot of questions about the details of how the new law will work with existing state laws and how many of the provisions of the law will actually work.

A good source for more information on health care reform is the Kaiser Family Foundation Web site at <http://healthreform.kff.org/>.