

# Get Ready for Health Care Reform!

## *For Immigrants*

The Affordable Care Act is a federal law that is changing the American health care system. It requires you to have health insurance starting January 1, 2014, or pay a penalty when you file your taxes (unless you can claim an exemption).

### HERE'S WHAT YOU CAN DO TO START GETTING READY NOW.

*Before  
October 1, 2013:*

● **Check to see where you can get health insurance:**

- Through your employer?
- Through your spouse, domestic partner, or parent?
- Through public health insurance?

*Starting  
October 1, 2013:*

● **Look for health insurance:**

- In the **New York State-run New York State of Health, the official health plan marketplace**, which opens October 1st.
  - To learn about the Marketplace, visit <http://nystateofhealth.ny.gov>
- Directly from an insurance company **outside of this marketplace**.

#### What is the New York State of Health, the official health plan marketplace?

- It is a New York State-run organization that contracts with insurance companies to offer health insurance to individuals and small businesses.
- It is federally approved to offer federal tax credits to lower health insurance costs.
- It is mainly for people who are under 65, live in New York, are uninsured, and can't get health insurance through a job.
- You can also get public health insurance – Medicaid and Child Health Plus – through this Marketplace.

#### Why would I use the New York State of Health to get insurance?

- You can compare plans from different insurers and choose the one that best fits your needs and budget.
- You can fill out one application to enroll in any plan offered in this Marketplace.
- You can get help online, over the phone, or in-person. Help over the phone and in-person will be available in many languages.
- Once you complete the application, you can find out if you qualify for \$0 or low-cost public health insurance, or a new tax credit that will lower your monthly costs for private health insurance.
- The tax credit and other subsidies to lower your costs are only available in this Marketplace.

To learn more about health care reform, visit the New York State of Health at <http://nystateofhealth.ny.gov> or email [exchange@health.state.ny.us](mailto:exchange@health.state.ny.us)



Robert Doar, Commissioner

REMEMBER: **You can start shopping in the New York State of Health on October 1, 2013!**

**Why look outside the Marketplace for insurance?**

There may be an insurance company that only sells insurance outside of the Marketplace.

If you like that plan, you'd have to buy it directly from the insurance company.

But you'll have to pay full price, because **the tax credit to lower your costs is only available in the Marketplace.**

**Can I buy health insurance through the New York State of Health?**

- Yes, if you live in NY and are a citizen or lawfully present immigrant.
- If someone in your family is undocumented, you can ask the Marketplace to connect you with a Navigator. He or she will talk with you in-person, in your preferred language, about your coverage options.
- Any information provided to the Marketplace is to be used for determining eligibility for health insurance only.
- You do not need to file income taxes to apply for insurance through the Marketplace. However, if you earn enough to get a tax credit, you will have to file taxes in future years.

**If I get health insurance through the New York State of Health, will it stop me from getting a green card, citizenship, or sponsoring a relative?**

No, it will not be held against you if you get health insurance in the Marketplace.

**What if I choose not to get health insurance?**

You will pay a penalty (a tax) when you file your taxes, unless you can claim an exemption. For example, in the first year, an adult could face a penalty of \$95 or 1% of income, whichever is higher. The total amount of the penalty will not exceed the average cost of bronze plans available in all Marketplaces. The amount of the penalty will increase in future years.

**Who can claim an exemption from the penalty?**

Undocumented immigrants will not have to pay a penalty if they do not get health insurance.

Most of the other exemptions apply to personal situations such as when coverage

- is not affordable or available, or
- is not purchased for religious reasons.

**What if I'm uninsured and need to go to the doctor?**

The City's public hospital system (the Health & Hospitals Corporation) and local community health centers provide medical care on a reduced-fee basis, depending on your income.

This care is available even if you are an undocumented immigrant. In NYC, your immigration status is protected as confidential whenever you access City services.

**Want to know more?**

To learn more about health care reform, visit the New York State of Health at <http://nystateofhealth.ny.gov>, or email [exchange@health.state.ny.us](mailto:exchange@health.state.ny.us).

**Make sure you have insurance by January 1, 2014.  
Most people must have insurance by this date or pay a penalty.**