

SO WHAT DO I DO IF AN INDIVIDUAL REGARDING THE AFFORDABLE CARE ACT (PART 3 OF 3)

Well, if the 20,000 page law is not confusing enough, add to it the inability of people to access the website at present and Congress introducing daily more and more bills to delay the enforcement of the law and penalties for a year, etc; and you now have massive confusion with no clear answers in sight.

Here is what we know as of now: January 1, 2014 is STILL the mandated date that everyone has to purchase their own healthcare if they do not have healthcare through an employer. If individuals choose not to purchase their own policy there is a federal government penalty.

The penalty is a percentage (1%) of the total annual household income or \$95 per adult and \$47.50 per child up to \$285 for a family in the first year, whichever is greater. It increases each year thereafter. In 2015 the penalty will be \$325 per adult and \$162 per child up to \$975 per family, or 2% of the family income, whichever is greater. By 2016 it is \$695 per adult, \$347.50 per child up to \$2,085 per family, or 2.5% of family income, whichever is greater. As you can see the penalties become steep and directly impacts the family's bottom line household income.

Individuals can apply for a subsidy if their income is 400% of the Family Poverty Level (which for 2012 was \$44,680 for an individual and \$92,200 for a family of 4). Also, there are some exemptions for individuals which includes:

- Low income individuals who cannot afford coverage
- Undocumented immigrants
- Indian tribal members and their dependents
- Individuals with a coverage gap of three or fewer months
- Members of certain religious sects
- Individuals who are in prison
- Low income individuals in states that have opted out of the Medicaid expansion
- Employees whose employer has transitional relief, during the relief period

Individuals will be able to pick between 4 plans: Bronze, Silver, Gold and Platinum. Average Annual Premiums range from \$10,908 for a family of 4 in the Bronze plan to as high as \$15,350 Average Annual Premium in the Platinum plan.

Bottom line is, if you are an individual and do NOT have affordable coverage through an Employer, you should contact a Professional Benefits Advisor to discuss your options and ways to try and enroll to avoid the penalties that have NOT been delayed yet. Call The O'Connor Insurance Group today, at 504-262-8900.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

www.uhc.com/reform

www.healthcarereformlouisiana.com