

# 10 Things Family PACT clients should know about the Affordable Care Act



## The new law affects you! Here's how:

### 1 What is the Affordable Care Act?

The Affordable Care Act, sometimes referred to as "Obamacare", makes health coverage more affordable for most low-income Californians. For some people, health coverage will be free. The law helps by:

- **Allowing more people to enroll in Medi-Cal.** Low-income adults who may not have qualified before can now receive health coverage through Medi-Cal. This includes adults without children and people who own assets such as a home.
- **Lowering costs.** The new law provides financial help to make private health coverage more affordable. If you qualify for financial help, it will lower what you pay each month for your coverage. It can also lower the out-of-pocket costs you pay when getting care.

### 2 What do the new health plans cover?

No health plan can refuse to cover you, even if you have a pre-existing condition such as asthma, diabetes, or pregnancy. All health plans must cover these essential health benefits:

- Preventive and wellness services
- Doctor visits
- Prescription drugs
- Laboratory services and medical tests
- Emergency services
- Maternity and newborn care
- Hospital stays
- Rehabilitation services
- Mental health and substance abuse disorder treatment
- Dental and vision for kids

### 3 What about birth control?

The new law makes birth control free for all women. All health plans must cover birth control methods and family planning services for free. Just like with Family PACT, you do not have to pay a co-pay, co-insurance, or deductible for these services.

### 4 I like my doctor. Can I keep my doctor if I enroll in Medi-Cal or private health insurance?

If staying with your current doctor is important to you, check with your doctor's office to see if they are part of the plan you want to choose. Also, a list of doctors and hospitals for each health plan will be posted on the Covered California website. You can see which plan(s) your doctor belongs to.

### 5 Will Family PACT continue?

Yes. You can remain enrolled in Family PACT and continue to receive Family PACT services, as long as you remain eligible and you:

- Are not in Medi-Cal
- Are not in Medi-Cal Managed Care
- Cannot use your health coverage for family planning services

For questions directly related to Family PACT, contact [fampact@dhcs.ca.gov](mailto:fampact@dhcs.ca.gov) or (916) 650-0414.

### 6 Can I just keep Family PACT?

The new law requires US citizens and legal residents to have health insurance or pay a fine when they file taxes. **Family PACT is not considered health insurance.** Family PACT is a limited-benefits family planning program. You will have health coverage for all your health care needs when you enroll through Covered California.



## 7 What is Covered California?

Covered California is a health insurance “marketplace” created by the new law. You can shop for and enroll in more affordable health coverage. And, it is the **only** place where you can purchase health insurance using federal financial assistance to lower costs. With Covered California you can:

- See if you qualify to enroll in free health coverage through Medi-Cal.
- If not,
  - Find out how much federal financial help you will get.
  - Shop for and compare health plans side by side.
  - Choose and enroll in a health plan that fits both your budget and health care needs.

## 8 Where do I go to find out my options for health coverage and learn more?

There are many ways to get help shopping for health coverage and enrolling in Medi-Cal or a health plan. You may:

- Go on the internet to [www.CoveredCA.com](http://www.CoveredCA.com);
- Call 1-800-300-1506
- Get help from:
  - Certified enrollment counselors
  - Certified insurance agents
  - Local county human or social services offices
  - Enrollment fairs and events advertised locally
- Apply and enroll directly in Medi-Cal at <http://www.benefitscal.org>

If you are under age 26, you are eligible for health coverage under your parent’s health insurance, even if you are married or a student.



## 9 When will my health coverage begin?

The sooner you enroll, the sooner your comprehensive health coverage will begin.

- You can enroll anytime you become eligible for Medi-Cal.
- For enrollment in private health coverage using federal financial assistance:
  - You must enroll using Covered California.
  - You must enroll by March 31, 2014 for health coverage in 2014.
  - If you do not enroll by March 31, 2014, your next opportunity to enroll will be between November 15, 2014 and January 15, 2015 for health coverage in 2015.

## 10 What else should I know?

The law requires all U.S. citizens and legal residents to have health insurance starting in 2014. If you are eligible and don’t have insurance there is a tax penalty. In 2014, it will be 1% of your annual income or \$95 per adult, whichever is greater. By 2016, the penalty will be 2.5% of your income or \$695 per adult.

Understanding how health insurance works is confusing for many people.

### Here are some important words to know:

**Out-of-pocket expenses:** These are health care costs that you must pay for with your own money.

**Monthly premium:** When you buy health insurance, you pay a monthly amount for it called a premium.

**Co-payment:** Some plans and some services may require you to pay a “co-pay” when you receive care. Usually, you will pay your co-pay before you receive the service. For example, you may need to pay a \$5 co-pay for an office visit or a prescription drug.

**Co-insurance:** Some plans “share the cost” of services with you by requiring you to pay a percentage of the cost. For example, if a doctor’s visit costs \$100, the plan may pay \$80 and you may pay \$20 in co-insurance for the visit. Usually, you are sent a bill for your co-insurance amount after the service is received.

**Deductible:** This is the total amount of money you must pay out-of-pocket when you receive health care services through your health plan before the insurance starts to pay costs.