

PRESS RELEASE

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Grassroots health care advocacy organization reacts to 2015 Health Insurance Marketplace Plans and Rates in Missouri

Consumers will see many more choices; Discounts are available to most shoppers

Missouri consumers shopping for health insurance through the Health Insurance Marketplace will have nearly twice as many choices of carriers and plans in 2015, according to plan details released this week by the Department of Health and Human Services. In St. Louis, consumers can choose from four insurance carriers and 41 insurance plans, up from two carriers and 25 plans in 2014.

“Consumer choice is one of the core benefits of the Health Insurance Marketplace,” says Jen Bersdale, Executive Director of Missouri Health Care for All. “Missourians this year will see many more choices when shopping for health insurance, giving them greater opportunity to select a plan that works for their families.”

In addition to a greater number of plans, consumers will have more choices in plan design, with the addition of new plans with a \$0 deductible, and in network coverage, with more carriers covering more providers.

“We are very excited about the new options available to Missouri consumers this year,” says Bersdale.

Premiums did increase this year, but the increases appear smaller than the double-digit increases prior to passage of the Affordable Care Act. The premium for the benchmark silver plan increased by about 5% for a 35 year old in the St. Louis area. However, Bersdale cautions that most consumers will not be affected by increases.

“Last year, 85% of Missourians who enrolled in a Marketplace plan received a significant discount on their insurance, allowing people to buy insurance for \$100, \$50, or \$10 a month, depending on their income. Those discounts allowed thousands of Missourians to afford insurance for the first time, and are still available for 2015 shoppers.”

Missouri Health Care for All encourages all consumers to shop for health insurance through the Marketplace when it opens for 2015 enrollment on Saturday, November 15.

“If you bought health insurance through the Marketplace last year, we encourage you to shop again this year and make sure you have the best plan available for you. If you didn’t enroll last year, there’s never been a better time to find out what your options are,” says Bersdale.

While the premium increases in Missouri are modest and will not affect most Marketplace shoppers, other states actually saw decreases in rates. There are steps that Missouri policymakers could take to mitigate future rate hikes.

“Right now, Missouri is the only state in the country whose Department of Insurance has no authority to review or approve insurance rates. If the Missouri General Assembly were to take up and pass rate review legislation, Missouri’s Department of Insurance could advocate on behalf of consumers to keep insurance rates low and block unjustifiable rate increases.”

Interviews Available: Missouri consumers who have enrolled in Health Insurance Marketplace Plans in 2014 are available for interview. To reach a consumer, or to schedule an interview with Missouri Health Care for All staff or board members, please contact Jen Bersdale, Executive Director, at 314-651-6568.

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