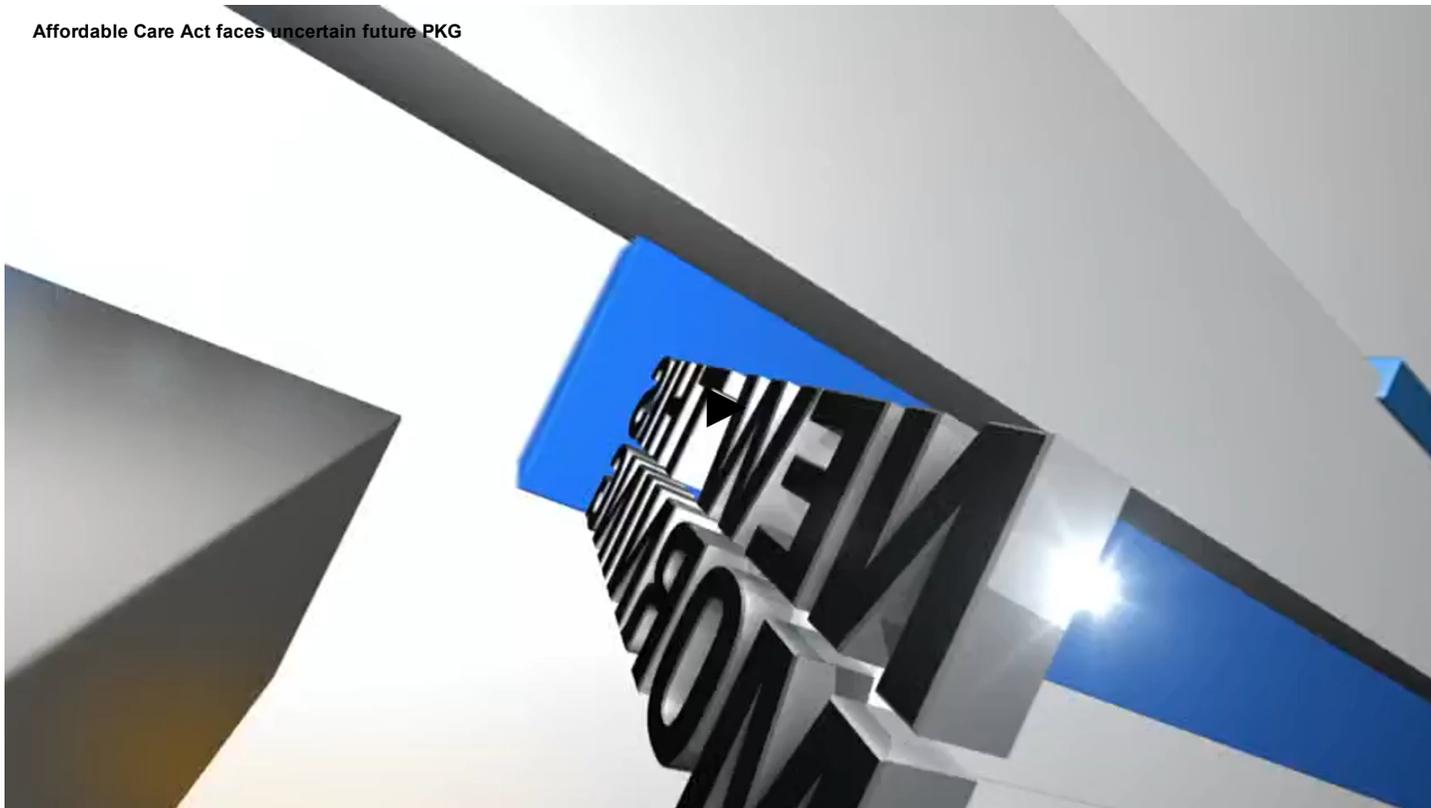


Affordable care act deadline draws near; many still confused about enrollment

Affordable Care Act faces uncertain future PKG



By Shayla Patrick | Posted: Wed 4:51 AM, Jan 18, 2017 | Updated: Wed 6:14 AM, Jan 18, 2017

SPRINGFIELD, Mo. Just days before the Affordable Care Act enrollment deadline many in the Ozarks, and nationwide still have concerns about the future of healthcare availability.

"We certainly have had a lot of questions this year, it is certainly on the minds of a lot of people we work with," said Cyndi Bussen, Certified Application Counselor with CoxHealth.

"What we have told people is that currently it is the law that you have health insurance, if you don't you will be assessed a penalty and until that changes the best thing to do is to enroll," Bussen explained.

Enrollment counselors with CoxHealth say the most common question they get is 'what will happen with government health insurance once President Elect Trump takes office?' 

"A lot of people tell us it's been very beneficial to them and they're concerned of what their options will be without the Affordable Care Act in place," said Bussen.

The answer, is not so clear.

"We don't know what's going to happen and we listen to the news just like everyone else, but what we tell people is we hope that there are positive changes. There certainly could be improvements made and we just look forward to positive changes," Bussen says.

Also hoping for positive changes are many residents who rely on insurance through the marketplace.

"My mom has insurance through the ACA and lots of other people I know have insurance through the ACA. Their well being depends on being able to have health insurance through the ACA," said Alex Johnson.

Johnson participated in a rally in Springfield earlier this week to spread awareness of this message.

"I want to see the ability to remain on your parents insurance, I want to see the per-existing conditions stay, those are the ones that affect me the closest to home," said Johnson.

This Saturday CoxHealth counselors will be available to offer free assistance to people needing to enroll or re-enroll in plans through the health insurance marketplace.

Assistance will be available at the following six locations, all open from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m:

- Cover Missouri Office (3318 S. National Ave., Springfield)
- Cox North Hospital (1423 N. Jefferson Ave., Springfield)
- Cox Medical Center Branson (525 Branson Landing Blvd., Branson)
- Cox Monett Hospital (801 Lincoln Ave., Monett) Help is available in Spanish.
- CMH Marketplace Office (2001 W. Broadway Ave., Bolivar)
- Joplin Public Library (300 S Main St., Joplin)

Walk-ins are welcome, but appointments are also available. Those coming for assistance should bring Social Security Numbers and dates of birth for anyone to be included on the health plan. Recent tax records can be helpful when determining income, but are not required.

For more information about the event or to make an appointment, call 417-269-2945.
