



Affordable Care Act (ACA) and MHIP FAQs

MHIP+, MHIP Federal and MHIP Federal+ Plans to End on December 31, 2013

What is the Affordable Care Act (ACA)?

ACA is federal legislation that expands health care coverage and defines the changes to the Individual and Small Group market. It is also known as the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA).

How will the Affordable Care Act (ACA) affect my health care coverage?

The Affordable Care Act has already impacted many Americans. As of 2010, coverage was expanded to include dependents up to age 26 and preventive services were expanded to include 36 additional services for \$0.

Beginning January 1, 2014, no insurance carrier can turn down individuals for having a pre-existing condition and who qualify for premium tax credits and cost sharing. Through the ACA, individuals will have many new options for health insurance and cannot be denied so you no longer need to stay within your MHIP plan.

What are “Health Insurance Exchanges” and how will they work?

Health Insurance Exchanges are federally-mandated online marketplaces used to purchase Individual and Small Group health coverage. These marketplaces can be administered by individual states, the federal government, or a combination, also known simply as Exchanges or Public Exchanges.

Beginning this October, many states - including Maryland and the District of Columbia - will offer health insurance through new online health insurance exchanges. They will allow you to compare different ACA-compliant health plans and enroll in them. You'll also find information about government-run programs like Medicaid and the State Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), as well as how to qualify and apply for federal assistance.

Maryland Health Connection is Maryland's new online shopping site opening October 1, 2013. It's the one place where you can go to compare prices and benefits, see premiums and deductibles, and find out what a plan will cost you every month.

Will I be able to continue my health care coverage with MHIP after December 31, 2013?

If you are currently in a MHIP Standard Plan or you qualify to move into a MHIP Standard plan, during the 2013 Open Enrollment you may remain in that plan through June 2014 and your plan's features and coverage will remain unchanged. MHIP+, MHIP Federal and MHIP Federal+ plan coverage will end on December 31, 2013. If you are currently a MHIP+, MHIP Federal or MHIP Federal+ plan member, you may transition to a new plan through Maryland Health Connection.

When will MHIP discontinue accepting new enrollment into the Standard plans?

MHIP will continue accepting MHIP Standard applications until Friday, November 13, 2013.

Note: Applications must be postmarked with a November 13, 2013 date in order to be accepted for review.

As a MHIP member, is there anything I need to do right now to prepare for the changes?

No, you do not need to take any action right now. MHIP will communicate with members throughout the year with specific updates.

When can I enroll in an ACA qualified health plan?

Open Enrollment for Affordable Care Act compliant plans begins October 1, 2013 for benefits effective on January 1, 2014.

If I enroll in a plan through Maryland Health Connection, will I receive any credit or carryover from my MHIP plan?

No, you will not receive any credit or carryover from your MHIP plan. However, in many cases the cost of the new plans may be lower than what you are paying for MHIP.

Will my current MHIP plan contract year still be July through June?

MHIP+, MHIP Federal and MHIP Federal+ plans will have a short plan year, ending 12/31/13, when members will transition to a new health plan. The MHIP Standard plan contract year will continue to be July 1, 2013 to June 30, 2014.

Will my deductible for the short plan year be cut in half?

No, the deductible for the MHIP+, MHIP Federal and MHIP Federal+ plans will remain the same even though the plan year is only six months.

Will premium rates be higher or lower for plans offered through Maryland Health Connection?

The premiums for plans offered through Maryland Health Connection will be finalized in July 2013. They may vary depending on age and other factors. More information about plans, rates, benefits and financial assistance will be available at <http://www.marylandhealthconnection.gov> in the coming weeks and months.

Will I be eligible for a tax subsidy if I enroll for a plan through Maryland Health Connection?

Many individuals will be eligible for premium tax credits and cost sharing reductions to lower the costs of their monthly premiums.

What is the Federal Poverty Level (FPL)? What income levels does that cover?

FPLs are income levels, updated annually by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, indicating that someone is living in poverty. These income levels are used for administrative purposes to calculate eligibility for assistance programs.

How will I know if my income qualifies me?

As part of the Open Enrollment process, you will be able to determine if your income qualifies you.

Will I be forced into a plan that is in compliance in January 2014?

MHIP+, MHIP Federal and MHIP Federal+ members will work with Maryland Health Connection to define the most appropriate plan on Maryland Health Connection. MHIP Standard plan members may stay in their current plans past 12/31/13.

Why would I want to keep the MHIP Standard plan if starting in January I can obtain coverage on Maryland Health Connection?

There is no requirement for you to stay in your MHIP Standard plan, but as a MHIP Standard member, you may choose to do so. This is a personal decision based on the needs of you and your family and the benefits provided by the plans from which you can choose.

Beginning October 1, 2013, you may go to marylandhealthconnection.gov to see the other plans available and compare benefits, prices, and determine what you might pay monthly. Open enrollment through Maryland Health Connection begins October 1, 2013 and ends March 31, 2014.

Will CareFirst still be the administrator of the plan?

The Maryland Health Insurance Plan will continue to contract with CareFirst BlueCross BlueShield to administer the MHIP Standard plans. Plans on Maryland Health Connection are available from multiple carriers in the market.

Do all insurance companies have to file their products and rates?

Yes, all insurance companies are required to file and make publicly accessible on the exchange all of the health insurance plans they offer. Since no existing plans met all of the ACA guidelines, every insurance company - including CareFirst - has had to create new plans that are "ACA compliant."

To be ACA compliant, all plans have to cover ten essential health benefits outlined in the ACA (including maternity, pediatric dental & vision, and prescription drug coverage, among others).

Will there be more deductibles to choose from?

Beginning October 2013, Maryland Health Connection, Maryland's health insurance marketplace will be open and you can go online to compare the plans, benefits and pricing all in one spot.

Go to marylandhealthconnection.gov for more information. Open enrollment through Maryland Health Connection begins October 1, 2013 and ends March 31, 2014.

Will I be forced to go to Maryland Health Connection?

MHIP+, MHIP Federal+ and MHIP Federal plans are being discontinued as of 12/31/13. If you are in one of these plans, you will no longer have coverage under MHIP as of 12/31/13. MHIP and Maryland Health Connection are working together to offer transition services to each MHIP individual to determine the right plan for you. You are not required to purchase your new insurance through Maryland Health Connection, but subsidies to help pay for premiums are only available through Maryland Health Connection.

Who can use the exchange?

Individuals, who have purchased their own health insurance in the past, as well as small businesses with up to 100 employees, can purchase qualified coverage through Health Insurance exchanges. If your employer already offers health insurance benefits, you will have no need to use a Health Insurance exchange.

Will MHIP continue accepting new applications after Maryland Health Connection is operational?

No, as of 12/31/13, by statute, MHIP will not accept any new applicants.

Will there be people available to answer my questions about the exchange?

Maryland Health Connection, Maryland's new online shopping site will open October 1, 2013. In addition to online resources, Marylanders seeking affordable health insurance options will also have a live call center to support shopping for and enrollment into a health plan. Maryland Health Connection also has over 450 partners across the state that offers in-person assistance. There will be plenty of support to help you find the plan that is right for you and your family. Open enrollment into new plans begins October 1, 2013 and ends March 31, 2014. Maryland Health Connection will also have specific support for MHIP members.

Learn more at:

www.marylandhealthinsuranceplan.net: Maryland Health Insurance

www.marylandhealthconnection.gov: Maryland Health Connection

<http://www.carefirst.com/reform>: CareFirst BlueCross BlueShield

www.healthcare.gov: A federal government site managed by the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services

www.HHS.gov: U.S. Department of Health & Human Services

www.irs.gov: Internal Revenue Services