

THE FEDERAL HEALTHCARE REFORM LAW HAS ALREADY CHANGED MUCH ABOUT HEALTHCARE AND THERE ARE MORE CHANGES ON THE WAY. IT CAN BE DIFFICULT TO KEEP IT ALL STRAIGHT. ABOUT HALF THE PUBLIC SAYS THEY DO NOT HAVE ENOUGH INFORMATION ABOUT THE HEALTH REFORM LAW TO UNDERSTAND HOW IT WILL IMPACT THEIR OWN FAMILY.

IT IS CLEAR THAT THE GENERAL PUBLIC IS NOT INFORMED ABOUT THE LAW, YET ALL EMPLOYERS ARE REQUIRED TO NOTIFY ALL EMPLOYEES BY OCTOBER 1, 2013, OF AVAILABILITY OF THE NEW HEALTH INSURANCE MARKETPLACE (ALSO KNOWN AS THE EXCHANGE) TO PURCHASE HEALTH INSURANCE. WE FELT THAT RECEIVING THIS INFORMATION WITHOUT ADDITIONAL EDUCATION WOULD BE EXTREMELY CONFUSING. AS A RESULT, WE ARE GOING TO BE SENDING A SERIES OF INFORMATIONAL PIECES EXPLAINING HOW THE NEW LAW WORKS AND HOW IT WILL AFFECT YOU AND YOUR FAMILY.

WHAT IS HEALTHCARE REFORM?

Healthcare Reform (HCR) is a law passed by Congress that provides many different requirements. A very important aspect of the law is that it is designed to provide individuals greater access to health care coverage.

It goes by many names: Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA) or ACA or Obama Care or simply Healthcare Reform.

WHAT ARE KEY THINGS I NEED TO KNOW?

- 1.** Beginning in 2014, the law requires *everyone* to have health care coverage! You may choose to purchase it on your own, enroll in your Employer sponsored plan, or if eligible, be covered by a government program such as Medicaid or Medicare. If you decide to go without coverage, you will likely face a financial government penalty.
- 2.** The law has created a “Health Insurance Marketplace,” often referred to as the “Exchange.” Think of the Health Insurance Marketplace as a one-stop information site where you can compare all your health care coverage options, learn about different plans and purchase the health care coverage that you need. You cannot be turned down for coverage on the Marketplace for any reason, including having pre-existing conditions. The Marketplace is meant to give people a place to compare and understand health plans from different insurance companies so that you can choose one that works the best for you.
- 3.** The law has created many new taxes and fees. Some of these additional taxes and fees may be required of you, your employer or both. You must remember that should you choose to go without coverage, you will pay increased costs due to additional taxes. For most individuals, this new law will NOT provide free health care coverage.