



The New Healthcare Law and You

How will the new healthcare law affect you if you have a **MENTAL ILLNESS AND MEDICARE OR MEDICAID?**

The **Affordable Care Act (ACA)** became law in March 2010. Today, parts of the law are already in place. Other parts will be phased in between now and 2014. Some changes are just for people with *mental illnesses* (words in italics defined below), but many are broad changes that benefit the mental and physical health of all Americans.

The ACA does not require you to change insurance or providers. It also does not reduce your Medicaid or Medicare benefits.

IF YOU HAVE MEDICARE ...

BEGINNING NOW

- Medicare covers 100% of the cost of certain *preventive services* such as depression screening.
- The ACA does not cut government-guaranteed benefits. These are the traditional Medicare Part A and B services, such as doctor's visits, hospital care and medical equipment. If you have a Medicare Advantage (Part C) plan, your insurer might offer extra benefits that Parts A and B do not cover, such as eyeglasses. Your Part C insurer can change these extra benefits if it wants to. For most people Medicare now covers more costs, offers more choices and works to improve the quality of care.
- The "donut hole," or time when you have to pay 100% of your drug costs, will be phased out. In 2012, while you are in this gap you will get 50% off brand-name

drugs and 14% off generic drugs. Your drug discounts will increase each year until 2020, when you will get 75% off all drugs.

BEGINNING IN 2014

- Medicare will cover more drugs to help you be healthier, such as smoking cessation drugs.

IF YOU HAVE MEDICAID ...

BEGINNING NOW

- Medicaid will cover 100% of the cost of certain preventive services such as depression screening.
- The "Money Follows the Person" program is extended through 2016. This program helps disabled Medicaid recipients move out of nursing homes or state hospitals and into their own house or apartment. The money that paid for the nursing home will now pay for long-term home care.

BEGINNING IN 2014

- If you make 133% or less of the Federal Poverty Level (currently \$14,484 for a single person) and are younger than 65, you will be able to get Medicaid. Eligibility will be based only on income and not on whether you are pregnant or disabled. As a result, Medicaid will be more available.
 - If you currently have Medicaid, the ACA will not change your benefits. But your state may change your

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Mental Illness: A medical condition that disrupts a person's thinking, feeling, mood, ability to relate to others and daily functioning. Severe mental illnesses include disorders such as major depression, schizophrenia, and bipolar disorder and severe anxiety disorders.

Preventive Services: Healthcare services aimed at preventing or finding early mental and physical health problems. These include annual wellness exams, flu shots, diabetes screenings and certain cancer screenings. Medicare and Medicaid started covering 100% of the cost of these services this year.

Medicaid plan. If they do this, they may lose federal funding or break other laws such as the Americans with Disabilities Act.

- If you will be a new Medicaid enrollee in 2014 and have a mental illness, you will most likely get the same level of coverage as those who already had Medicaid.
- Medicaid will cover more drugs to help you stay well, such as smoking cessation drugs.
- Almost everyone will be required to have insurance. There are exceptions for:
 - Financial hardship
 - Gaps in insurance of three months or less
 - People with a documented religious objection
 - Members of Indian tribes
- If you and members of your family do not have insurance and do not qualify for an exception, you will each be fined:
 - **In 2014:** \$95 or 1% of income up to \$285
 - **In 2015:** \$325 or 2% of income up to \$975
 - **In 2016 and later:** \$695 or 2.5% of income up to \$2,085



IF YOU ARE DUAL-ELIGIBLE ...

- The Affordable Care Act requires better coordinated care for people covered by both Medicare and Medicaid. This will make it easier for doctors, hospitals and others to work together to keep you healthy. It also could help people choose to stay at home longer rather than live in a nursing home.



This is part of a series about the new health care law — the Affordable Care Act. For more information, visit reform.healthfoundation.org

The Health Foundation of Greater Cincinnati is an independent non-profit dedicated to improving community health through grants, evaluation and education. The Foundation works in Cincinnati and 20 surrounding counties in Indiana, Kentucky and Ohio.

