

Wright Benefits is dedicated to listening to your insuring needs, finding the correct products, planning for the future and servicing the coverages in which your employees are enrolled. The federal government has recently passed landmark changes regarding health care. Some changes will be implemented immediately; others will take effect over the coming years. If you have specific questions, please do not hesitate to call or request a visit.

Please note the following changes which will be implemented in the first year under the recently passed health care legislation-

Tax credits for small businesses: Businesses with fewer than 25 employees and average wages of less than \$50,000 could qualify for a tax credit of up to 35 percent of the cost of their premiums.

A ban on lifetime limits on medical coverage: This limits an insurer from placing a lifetime per member maximum on the amount they will pay for covered medical services. Restrictions will also be placed on annual limits on coverage. Insurers can no longer cancel insurance retroactively for reasons other than outright fraud.

Coverage of kids: Children will be allowed under their parent's health insurance plan until age 26, unless the child is eligible for coverage through the child's employer. Insurance plans cannot exclude pre-existing medical conditions from coverage for children under age 19. In the individual market, insurers can reject those children for coverage until 2014.

Increased oversight of premium increases: The New York State Insurance Department currently approves quarterly rates filed by insurance carriers. The new legislation allows for more oversight of these rates. Insurers must report how much they spend on claims for medical care in addition to administrative costs making them more transparent to government oversight of premiums.

New help for some uninsured: Individuals with a pre-existing condition that has left them uninsurable may be able to enroll in a new federally subsidized insurance program that is to be established over the next three months.

Discounts and free care in Medicare: Medicare beneficiaries with prescription coverage that includes a doughnut hole will get a \$250 rebate this year. Next year, their cost in the doughnut hole is to be cut by 50%. Starting this year, qualifying preventive services will be provided with no co-payments or deductibles.

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