

Notice of New Health Insurance Marketplace Options

Under the rules of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (commonly known as “health care reform”), New Hanover Regional Medical Center is required to provide you a notice. It contains information about the new health insurance marketplace that will soon begin offering health care coverage options to individuals. You will receive a customized copy of this notice mailed to your home address in September and you may also access a general copy of the notice here on NHRMCBenefits.com.

Created as a result of the health care reform law, the health insurance marketplace is a “one-stop shop” that individuals can use to shop for, compare, and buy individual health insurance policies. Each state will have a marketplace – some states have decided to establish their own, however North Carolina has defaulted to the Federal Exchange model.

The marketplaces will begin enrolling individuals in October 2013 for coverage that will begin as early as January 2014, so you may soon find your mailbox filled with advertisements from insurance companies promoting the plans they are selling through the marketplace. As a result, you’ll need to determine what coverage option makes the most sense for your particular situation.

If you are eligible and have coverage through New Hanover Regional Medical Center or your spouse’s employer, you may want to stick with it. Employer-sponsored plans (like ours) are often paid in large part by the employer. Employers do not, however, contribute toward the cost of coverage purchased through the marketplace. Some individuals may be eligible for federal subsidies for coverage purchased through an exchange, but only if their income is below a certain threshold and they are not eligible for employer-sponsored coverage that meets affordability and coverage standards.

If you do choose to apply for coverage through the marketplace, the application you must complete will ask for information about your eligibility for New Hanover Regional Medical Center’s medical plans, your cost for the plan (if eligible), and whether the plan meets minimum coverage standards. Should you need this information, please contact HR-Benefits at 910-343-7049.

We encourage you to carefully compare all the options available to you, including coverage details as well as cost. If you would like more information about the marketplace, marketplace premium subsidies, or health care reform in general, please visit HealthCare.gov.

New Health Insurance Marketplace Coverage Options and Your Health Coverage

PART A: General Information

When key parts of the health care law take effect in 2014, there will be a new way to buy health insurance: the Health Insurance Marketplace. To assist you as you evaluate options for you and your family, this notice provides some basic information about the new Marketplace and employment-based health coverage offered by your employer.

What is the Health Insurance Marketplace?

The Marketplace is designed to help you find health insurance that meets your needs and fits your budget. The Marketplace offers "one-stop shopping" to find and compare private health insurance options. You may also be eligible for a new kind of tax credit that lowers your monthly premium right away. Open enrollment for health insurance coverage through the Marketplace begins in October 2013 for coverage starting as early as January 1, 2014.

Can I Save Money on my Health Insurance Premiums in the Marketplace?

You may qualify to save money and lower your monthly premium, but only if your employer does not offer coverage, or offers coverage that doesn't meet certain standards. The savings on your premium that you're eligible for depends on your household income.

Does Employer Health Coverage Affect Eligibility for Premium Savings through the Marketplace?

Yes. If you have an offer of health coverage from your employer that meets certain standards, you will not be eligible for a tax credit through the Marketplace and may wish to enroll in your employer's health plan. However, you may be eligible for a tax credit that lowers your monthly premium, or a reduction in certain cost-sharing, if your employer does not offer coverage to you at all or does not offer coverage that meets certain standards. If the cost of a plan from your employer that would cover you (and not any other members of your family) is more than 9.5% of your household income for the year, or if the coverage your employer provides does not meet the "minimum value" standard set by the Affordable Care Act, you may be eligible for a tax credit.*

Note: If you purchase a health plan through the Marketplace instead of accepting health coverage offered by your employer, then you may lose the employer contribution (if any) to the employer-offered coverage. Also, this employer contribution - as well as your employee contribution to employer-offered coverage - is often excluded from income for Federal and State income tax purposes. Your payments for coverage through the Marketplace are made on an after-tax basis.

How Can I Get More Information?

Benefit eligible employees:

For more information about your coverage provided by NHRMC, please check your plan description at NHRMCBenefits.com, NHRMCPGBenefits.com, or contact the HR-Benefits Team: PO Box 2318, Wilmington, NC 28401, or call: 910-343-7049, or e-mail: HR.Benefits@nhrmc.org.

Employees not eligible for benefits:

The Marketplace can help you evaluate your coverage options, including your eligibility for coverage through the Marketplace and its cost. Please visit HealthCare.gov for more information, including an online application for health insurance coverage and contact information for a Health Insurance Marketplace in your area.

* An employer-sponsored health plan meets the "minimum value standard" if the plan's share of the total allowed benefit costs covered by the plan is no less than 60 percent of such costs (Section 36B(c)(2)(C)(ii) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986).