



Working Together To Make Affordable, Quality Healthcare a Reality for All in Michigan

## Get the Facts About the Affordable Care Act.

### **Myth: We don't need health care reform.**

**FACT:** The U.S. health care system needs to be reformed for three main reasons:

1. High costs.
2. Poor health outcomes.
3. Poor access to care (uninsured).

U.S. healthcare costs are among the highest in the world. Premiums rise as much as 37% per year. Latest estimates (2010) report 50.7 million Americans are without insurance. Under the current system, 82,690 Americans lose their health insurance every week. ("Five Facts About the Uninsured," Kaiser Family Foundation, Sept. 2010.) This year, an estimated 900,000 Americans will go bankrupt because of medical bills. (CNN, June 5, 2009)

### **Myth: It's a government-run system, including care and treatment.**

**FACT:** Health Reform does **not** take over the current US Health Care system. Employers and individuals still purchase health insurance which pays doctors, hospitals and other providers.

- It is not a government-sponsored, public, or "single payer" plan.
- It does not replace insurance companies with a government-run program.
- It puts people, not health insurance companies or government, in charge of health care.

The law **strengthens** current employer-based health insurance. With the Patient Bill of Rights, insurance companies must treat their customers more fairly. Insurance companies can't deny coverage or treatments because of pre-existing conditions. They can't cap the amount of coverage you receive for your lifetime.

**More** people will get private health insurance. Tax credits will help small businesses, families and individuals pay for insurance.

### **Myth: It will cost too much.**

**FACT:** The 10-year impact of the health care reform law will be to **reduce** the national deficit by over \$130 billion. It does cost money to implement the reforms in the law. But it also saves money over time. Having more people covered will reduce emergency room care, bad debt for providers, and premium costs. Getting to the doctor sooner will prevent more expensive treatment.



## **Myth: The law cuts Medicare services by over \$500 billion.**

**FACT:** The law cuts Medicare **expenses** by changing the pay structure for Medicare Advantage plans. The law does not cap or reduce Medicare Advantage enrollment. Access to competitive, high-quality Medicare Advantage plans will continue. Health care reform **adds benefits**. It adds free prevention coverage, an annual wellness visit and a phase-out of the Medicare donut hole.

## **Fear: The law institutes death panels and rationing of care.**

**FACT:** The law leaves care decisions in the hands of patients and their doctor. The law does not have any government panels making medical decisions about a person's care.

The new law **reduces** rationing of care by insurance companies. Insurance companies make decisions based on what is profitable for them, not what is best for you. They control treatments, medicines and which doctors you can see. The new law eliminates limits on coverage. It guarantees coverage for pre-existing conditions. And it reduces rationing of preventive care like colonoscopy and mammograms.

## **Fear: Illegal immigrants will be given insurance.**

**FACT:** The law **prohibits** undocumented residents from being covered by the ACA. **Legal** immigrants can participate in health insurance exchanges. But undocumented immigrants are not covered at all. They are not eligible for tax credits to purchase insurance. They will still be uninsured after the law takes full effect in 2014.

## **Fear: Insurance plans will be required to provide abortions.**

**FACT:** The law **prohibits** federal funds for abortions except when the mother's life is threatened, or for incest or rape. Private insurers that offer abortion coverage through the insurance exchanges are required to separate funds. People will have to write a separate check to the insurance company for abortion coverage if they want it.

## **Fear: People will be forced to buy insurance they can't afford.**

**FACT:** It is not against the law to choose to be uninsured. Not having insurance isn't a crime. Taxpayers must have affordable insurance coverage OR pay a tax penalty along with their income tax. People whose income is so low that they don't file taxes don't pay the tax. Or if insurance would cost more than 8% of their income, people don't have to pay the tax. People who have religious objections are excluded from this tax. Some people will choose to be uninsured since the mandate tax is much less than the cost of affordable insurance. If people don't have insurance and become sick, they will be completely responsible for their health care costs.

Subsidies and supports help low income people get covered. People with incomes below 200% of poverty will not have to pay premiums for health care (through Medicaid expansion and state exchange subsidies).