

TO: All Employees
FROM: Sarasota County School Board
Risk Management Department



DATE: September 16, 2013

RE: Health Care Reform – General Information and Notice

What You Need to Know

Health care is changing—but how? And what does that mean for you? It can be tough to keep up with so much complicated information. The Affordable Care Act, also known as “health care reform,” has brought big changes to the U.S. health insurance system. Many of the biggest changes will start on January 1, 2014.

You Must Have Insurance

Most Americans will be required to have health insurance, or pay a penalty. This is commonly referred to as the “individual mandate.” Americans will have a new opportunity to enroll in health care provided through State or Federal Exchanges (also known as Marketplaces). The good news is that you cannot be turned down for coverage in the Marketplace, regardless of medical history or ability to pay. The State of Florida does not provide a state marketplace, so all Floridians will be eligible for coverage under the Federal Marketplace.

The penalty for not having health insurance is the greater of 1% of your household income or \$95 per adult/\$47.50 per child under age 18 in 2014. That penalty is scheduled to increase significantly in 2015 and 2016.

You will not have to pay the penalty if any one of the following apply:

- **You have insurance through the Sarasota County School Board.** The good news is that our medical plans meet and exceed all of the ACA-mandated requirements for coverage and affordability.
- You buy insurance on your own.
- You have insurance through Medicare, Medicaid, CHIP, the Veteran’s Administration and/or Tricare for active duty and retired military, Indian Health Services, or a health care sharing ministry.
- You must pay more than 8% of your household income to buy the least expensive health insurance plan that’s available to you, even after you consider any financial help you may be eligible for. Note that the income cutoff for avoiding the penalty (more than 8%) is different than the income cutoff (less than 9.5%) that is used to define affordable *employer* coverage.
- You qualify for a hardship. This applies if you aren’t eligible for Medicaid because your state chose not to expand Medicaid, or if you have a personal or financial issue that keeps you from being able to afford coverage.
- You have a gap in health insurance for less than three consecutive months in a calendar year.
- You don’t make enough money to file a federal income tax return.
- You live outside of the U.S.
- You’re in one of these categories: undocumented immigrants, people who are in jail, members of Native American tribes, and those who qualify for a religious exemption.

If you are enrolled in one of the SBSC medical plans in 2014, your coverage will exceed the minimal coverage and affordability standards required by the law and you will not have to pay a penalty.