



Volume 5, Issue 11
November 2014



Our monthly newsletter addresses consumer insurance topics as well as timely information on issues affecting senior citizens in Louisiana.



CENLA Area Agency on Aging Sponsored Medicare Open Enrollment Event
Date: November 12, 2014
Time: 9:00 a.m.
Location: 602 East Fifth Street, Oakdale, LA

CENLA Area Agency on Aging Sponsored Medicare Open Enrollment Event
Date: November 13, 2014
Time: 8:30 a.m.
Location: 939 Bryan Street, Cottonport, LA

Central LA Area Health Education Center Sponsored Open Enrollment Event
Date: November 15, 2014
Time: 8:00 a.m.
Location: 500 Patterson Street, Lafayette, LA

Central LA Area Health

Open Enrollment Period Begins in November

In October we told you about Medicare Open Enrollment, which began October 15 and runs through December 7. We also told you about Open Enrollment for everyone else, which is November 15 through February 15. This newsletter will provide additional information on the latter Open Enrollment.

Open enrollment for individual health plans is the time Louisiana residents must enroll in or make changes to their health coverage for next year. Those without health insurance coverage can purchase individual policies through an agent, through a private insurer, from an online health insurance seller, or sign up through the online Health Insurance Marketplace (www.healthcare.gov) or SHOP if offered to you by your small business employer. Those who purchased a health insurance plan through the Marketplace in 2014 can renew their current plan or enroll in a different plan for 2015. The Marketplace is beginning its second year of operation.

If you are applying for health insurance on the Marketplace, you must report any changes to the information you included on your 2014 application. Information changes to report include:

- Changes in income
- An offer of job-based coverage to anyone in your household
- Change of permanent address
- Birth or adoption
- Divorce or separation
- Death
- Placing a child for adoption or foster care
- A child on your policy turning 26
- A dependent changing status
- A household member getting coverage from Medicaid, CHIP, or Medicare

Important deadlines to remember:

2014 Key Marketplace Dates

- **December 31, 2014:** All 2014 Marketplace coverage ends, no matter when you enrolled.

2015 Key Enrollment Dates

- **November 15, 2014:** Open enrollment begins. This is the first day you can purchase an individual health insurance policy from an agent, private insurer, online health insurance seller, or log in to www.healthcare.gov to review your plan choices and change plans for 2015.
- **December 15, 2014:** If you won't be automatically enrolled, you must choose a plan and complete all enrollment steps by this date to be covered starting January 1, 2015 and avoid a penalty for being

Education Center
Sponsored Open
Enrollment Event
Date: November 15,
2014
Time: 9:00 a.m.
Location: 5131
Greenwell Springs Road,
Baton Rouge, LA

Central LA Area Health
Education Center
Sponsored Open
Enrollment Event
Date: November 15,
2014
Time: 10:00 a.m.
Location: 312 Main
Street, Pineville, LA

Central LA Area Health
Education Center
Sponsored Open
Enrollment Event
Date: November 15,
2014
Time: 10:00 a.m.
Location: 204 NE
Central Avenue, Amite,
LA

CENLA Area Agency on
Aging Sponsored
Medicare Open
Enrollment Event
Date: November 17,
2014
Time: 9:30 a.m.
Location: 300 Bushley
Street, Harrisonburg, LA

CENLA Area Agency on
Aging Sponsored
Medicare Open
Enrollment Event
Date: November 18,
2014
Time: 9:00 a.m.
Location: 314 South
Sixth Street, Oberlin, LA

CENLA Area Agency on
Aging Sponsored
Medicare Open
Enrollment Event
Date: November 20,
2014
Time: 8:30 a.m.
Location: 111 Bordelon
Street, Hessmer, LA

uninsured during any part of 2015.

- **January 1, 2015:** First date 2015 coverage can begin.
- **February 15, 2015:** Deadline to sign up for 2015 coverage. If you miss this deadline, you can't enroll in coverage during 2015 unless you have a qualifying event such as marriage, divorce, birth of a child, adoption or moving that may result in the occurrence of a Special Enrollment Period.

Note: If you enroll between the 1st and 15th days of the month, your coverage begins the first day of the next month. If you enroll between the 16th and last day of the month, your coverage will begin the first day of the second following month.

Penalties and Subsidies

The Affordable Care Act includes mandatory participations and financial penalties for those who do not purchase health insurance. You may be subject to the penalty provision of the Affordable Care Act if you don't have minimum essential health insurance coverage in place on January 1, 2015 or if you didn't have it in 2014.

A penalty of the greater of one percent of yearly household income or \$95 per individual is assessed for non-compliance during 2014 and is due with the 2014 federal tax filing in the spring of 2015. Individuals who do not have health insurance in 2015 will be subjected to a penalty of two percent of their yearly household income or \$325 per individual for the year (\$162.50 per child under 18), whichever is higher. This is collectable when filing the 2015 federal income tax return in the spring of 2016. The penalty will increase to 2.5 percent of yearly household income or \$695 per adult in 2016. It will be adjusted for inflation thereafter.

Remember, if you want to change your 2015 plan after December 15, 2014, your coverage won't start on January 1 and you will incur the penalty. Check the notice from your health plan to find out when your coverage will start. **It's advisable to purchase your health insurance plan prior to December 15 for this reason.**

Provisions that were introduced last year in the Affordable Care Act include guaranteed issue for everyone regardless of their health condition, no lifetime limits on essential benefits, coverage of preventive health services including disease prevention and wellness programs, extension of adult dependent coverage to age 26 and subsidies for those who qualify (incomes between 100 percent and 400 percent of the federal poverty level) remain in effect in 2015. Subsidies are only available to those who qualify and enroll online through the Marketplace. Your qualification status varies based on your income and will be determined upon application.

SHOP: New Marketplace for Small Businesses

In addition to the individual Marketplace, the Small Business Health Options Program (SHOP) was created for small businesses with 50 or fewer full-time-equivalent employees to purchase health insurance for their employees as an optional feature. For an incentive to small businesses to participate in SHOP, the federal government is offering tax credits worth up to 50 percent of the employer's premium contributions for businesses who qualify.

For more information, please go to <https://www.healthcare.gov/small-businesses/>.

Puente's Enrollment Summit and Health Fair

Date: November 22, 2014

Time: 10:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Location: Delgado Community College
615 City Park Avenue,
New Orleans, LA

To find out if Consumer Advocacy will be in your area or to request a speaker for your organization or group, call (225) 219-0619 or send an email to

consumeradvocacy@ldi.la.gov

If you no longer wish to receive this newsletter please send an email to the following address with "REMOVE FROM CONSUMER ADVOCACY MAILING LIST" in the subject line.

public@ldi.la.gov

Online Health Rates and Forms

Starting November 15, health rate and form filings will be available via a new online system called SERFF Filing Access (SFA). To view health insurance rate summaries and access health rate filings, please go to www.ldi.la.gov/healthrates.

Rates for individual and small group health insurance plans being offered in 2015 are the first ones reviewed by actuaries with the Louisiana Department of Insurance to make sure they are in compliance with state and federal laws. Act 718 gave the Louisiana Department of Insurance the authority to review the actuarial assumptions and methods used by a health insurance issuer in establishing a plan rate but the Department does not have authority to approve or disapprove the rate. For example, actuaries verified whether a company's assumption of future medical claims costs and inflation were aligned with their own calculations. In some cases, issuers lowered their rates in response to our actuaries' findings of erroneous assumptions.

For additional information, you can download the LDI publication [Consumer's Guide to Health Insurance](#) or [Understanding the Affordable Care Act](#) on the Department website www.ldi.la.gov. If you have questions about a rate increase, you may email healthrates@ldi.la.gov.

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