

# KNOW YOUR INSURANCE.

From Touchstone Consulting Group

## 2017 Marketplace Cost Trends

The open enrollment period for obtaining health coverage for 2017 through the Affordable Care Act (ACA) Marketplace begins Nov. 1, 2016, and ends Jan. 31, 2017. In order for your health plan to become effective by Jan. 1, 2017, you must enroll in or change your health plan by Dec. 15, 2016.

The 2017 Marketplace looks a bit different than it did last year. To help you make the best health insurance decision for you or your family, the largest changes for this year are outlined below.

### **Increased Premium Costs**

According to a report from the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), premiums for a midlevel benchmark plan from the federal Marketplace will increase an average of 25 percent, before applying applicable subsidies. This is a significant increase when compared to the 7 percent increase in 2016 and the 2 percent increase in 2015.

Despite this increase, the Obama administration states that about 70 percent of Marketplace consumers will be able to obtain a health plan for less than \$100 per

month with the use of subsidies and smart shopping.

### **Increased Availability of Subsidies**

Kevin Griffis, a spokesperson for HHS, states the “number of people eligible for tax credits will increase in 2017.” These tax credits (subsidies) are adjusted based on income level, so depending on your income, you may or may not be eligible. Visit [www.healthcare.gov/lower-costs/qualifying-for-lower-costs/](http://www.healthcare.gov/lower-costs/qualifying-for-lower-costs/) for more information or to check your eligibility.

**Premium prices will increase significantly, but the increased availability of subsidies is expected to help offset the cost of obtaining health coverage for many consumers.**

### **Decreased Insurance Provider Options**

Three major insurers (Aetna, Humana and UnitedHealthcare) pulled out of the Marketplace in many states and will not offer health plans for 2017. Consequently, an estimated 1 in 5 consumers will find only one insurer with offerings for their location next year. Nationwide, however, consumers will see an average of 10 plans per insurer. Careful evaluation of available plans will be critical in finding cost-savings for consumers.

### **Summary**

Although rates are increasing, depending on your location, it is likely that there are affordable health care offerings if all available subsidies are taken advantage of and plans are chosen with care.

The Marketplace [website](#) allows you to preview available health insurance plans and estimate plan prices based on your income and location prior to the impending open enrollment period, and even after open enrollment begins. Entering your income and location will help you determine which subsidies you are eligible for (if any) and show you the plans available in your area to help you make the best health insurance choice for you or your family.

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