

Affordable Care Act Milestones for America's Small Businesses

2010 - The Affordable Care Act Becomes Law

- Many small businesses become eligible for tax credits worth up to 35% of the employer's contribution to the employees' health insurance to help them provide insurance benefits to their workers. Small non-profit organizations may receive up to a 25% credit.
- A new Patient's Bill of Rights goes into effect, protecting consumers from the worst abuses of the insurance industry.

2011 - The Affordable Care Act Holds Insurance Companies Accountable

- To ensure premium dollars are spent primarily on medical care, the law's "80/20" rule requires that at least 80% of premium dollars collected by insurance companies for individuals and small employers must be spent on benefits and quality improvement.
- Another tough reform requires insurance companies to publicly justify premium rate increases, holding insurers accountable to the small businesses they serve, which has led to a sharp decline in double-digit rate hikes.
- To date, these two protections alone have already saved small businesses and consumers more than \$2 billion.

2012 - The Affordable Care Act Reduces Administrative Costs and Burdens

- Effective in October, the law institutes a series of changes to cut costs and improve care by standardizing billing and requiring health plans to begin implementing rules for the secure, confidential, electronic exchange of health information.

2013 - Open Enrollment in the Marketplaces Begins

- On October 1st, individuals and small businesses can buy affordable benefit plans by enrolling in the new Individual and Small Business Health Insurance Options Program (SHOP) Marketplaces. For the first time, individuals and business owners are able to make side-by-side comparisons to find a plan that fits their budget and that's right for their families, businesses, and employees.

2014 - The Marketplaces Open

- Individual and SHOP Marketplaces open in all 50 states and the District of Columbia on January 1. Tax credits for eligible small businesses participating in the SHOP Marketplace go up to 50% (35% for non-profits). Individuals and the self-employed may qualify for premium tax credits and cost sharing subsidies as well.
- Effective January 1, self-employed individuals must have health insurance that meets the minimum essential coverage standards, qualify for an exemption, or be subject to an assessable payment.

2015 – Employer Shared Responsibility

- Starting in 2015, employers with 50 or more full-time or full-time equivalent (FTE) employees must offer minimum essential coverage to all full-time employees or be subject to a potential Employer Shared Responsibility payment.