
Oregon's Health Insurance Exchange

A central marketplace for health insurance

The new Oregon Health Insurance Exchange Corporation has been tasked by the legislature to develop a plan for our state's exchange. Through the exchange, 350,000 Oregonians would have access to affordable, high quality health care beginning in 2014. In December 2011, a business plan for the exchange will be presented to lawmakers for review and approval.

As envisioned by Senate Bill 99, the business plan will set up the exchange to include the following:

- Oregon's exchange will be a central marketplace where carriers must compete on quality and value, and consumers will have apples-to-apples information about health insurance. Consumers will know exactly what they are buying and information will be accessible in a variety of formats, which may include by phone, website or with an agent's help.
- The exchange will be run by a public corporation with a public board. The board will include two ex officio members and seven members who are appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate. It will have at least two consumer representatives, but no more than two representatives from various health care sectors.
- The exchange board will establish standards for participating insurers. Those that do not meet the minimum standards will not be allowed to market their products in Oregon's exchange. This will give people and small businesses who buy insurance a choice of a plan that works best for them. Oregon's exchange will offer choice, competition, value and transparency.

Available for individuals and small businesses

Individuals

The exchange will be open to all Oregonians purchasing insurance individually. Tax credits will be available to assist Oregonians who cannot afford the high cost of premiums. Federal premium tax credits and subsidies will be available for people with incomes up to 400 percent of the federal poverty level (\$89,400 for a family of four).

Small Businesses

Coverage through the exchange will be available for small businesses with 50 or fewer employees beginning in 2014. Small businesses will be able to give their employees a set amount of money to buy coverage from the exchange, allowing employers to plan for and manage health care costs while giving employees more choices. And people who leave their jobs will have the option to keep their coverage. The exchange will also help streamline health plan administration for small businesses.

Coverage beginning as soon as January 2014

By late 2013, individuals and small employer groups will be able to purchase health insurance through the exchange, with coverage starting as early as 2014. The exchange will be available to employers with more than 50 employees by 2016. The Oregon Health Policy Board and Oregon Health Authority are working for better health, better care and lower costs for all Oregonians.

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