

IMPORTANT NOTICE REGARDING AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

What is Happening With Health Insurance?

You have probably heard some news lately about changes in our nation related to health insurance. You may be curious as to what is happening, what is being updated, does it affect me and how does it affect my employer?

The Affordable Care Act (ACA) is intended to extend healthcare coverage to those who are uninsured and defines a mechanism for fees, taxes and penalties to help finance the cost associated with providing healthcare to all citizens. Effective 1/1/14 residents of the USA must maintain Minimum Essential Coverage (MEC) or face tax penalties. You will hear terms such as California's Marketplace, California Exchange, Health Insurance Exchange and Covered California which are used to describe the same health coverage options for citizens. Covered California is an independent state agency charged with creating the new insurance marketplace providing health access for individuals and families. Covered California will implement the Federal Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act in California and assure that it is working for consumers.

In the next few weeks, you may begin to see more and more news coverage and advertising about the Affordable Care Act (ACA) and Covered California. Many people are still unaware of the huge changes taking place in our health care system, the decisions they will need to make and the impact on their personal health care costs. It is very likely that you and your family will have questions about what these changes will mean for you and your benefits. We want to provide you with this information introducing you to some of the healthcare reform changes occurring and to help address questions and concerns you may have.

Under the ACA, most people will be required to have health insurance coverage by January 1, 2014, or they will have to pay a tax penalty. You may already be enrolled in or eligible for health coverage through RCCD and can avoid the tax penalty. We will be offering our eligible employees health coverage during our regular enrollment period which will be conducted during the month of September. The employer mandate section of ACA has been postponed until 01/01/2015.

If you are not eligible for coverage through RCCD you can obtain individual health insurance through Covered California, the state-operated marketplace for purchasing coverage. Covered California's open enrollment period will run from October 1, 2013 through March 31, 2014. Depending on household income, some individuals may become eligible for discounts and tax credits to help pay for insurance coverage. *NOTE: If you are offered qualifying health insurance coverage through your employer (whether or not you choose to enroll), you will not be able to receive a tax credit for coverage through Covered California. Detailed information about Covered California can be found on their website at www.coveredca.com.*

RCCD wants to be sure you are well informed about the upcoming changes happening due to ACA implementation and will provide you with information as required by ACA. If you have questions about the ACA, Covered California or your employer-provided benefits, we will work with you to help find the answers.

- **Covered California - www.coveredca.com**
- **Pauline Castro –Benefits Specialist, RCCD Diversity & Human Resources Department 951.328.3873 or e-mail pauline.castro@rccd.edu**

You are encouraged to learn as much as you can about Covered California and carefully consider options available to you. The ACA will affect your coverage costs, what services the coverage you select will pay for, and the doctors and hospitals that may be available to you. Start looking into these questions now so you will be prepared to make decisions toward the end of the year. It is important for you to understand your choices – and only you can decide what is best for you and your family.