Health care reform, specifically the Affordable Care Act (ACA)*, consists of a multitude of provisions that will change health insurance for many Americans.

*As ACA is still very new, parts of it may be subject to ongoing interpretation and revision.

Watch for Issue 8 of In a Nutshell – with more information for you about ACA.


1. **What if I have job-based health insurance?**
   
   If your employer offers job-based health insurance that meets the minimum requirements of the law and you like it, you can take that coverage. You're considered covered and you need not do anything more. However, you may be able to change to Marketplace coverage if you want to.

   Employers offering coverage are required to have it qualify as minimum essential coverage or pay a penalty. You don’t need to change to a Marketplace plan in order to avoid the fee that uninsured people may have to pay for 2014. If you’d like to explore Marketplace coverage options you can, but there are important things to consider.

2. **What must I consider when comparing my job-based plan(s) and Marketplace plans?**
   
   With most job-based health insurance plans, your employer pays a portion of your premiums. If you choose a Marketplace plan instead, your employer does not contribute toward your premiums. You should consider this carefully before comparing Marketplace plans. Also, if you obtain coverage through a Marketplace, your employer may be required to pay a $3,000 annual penalty to the IRS.

3. **How do I know if I qualify for Marketplace savings?**
   
   If you decide to check out Marketplace plans, be aware that you may not qualify for lower costs on your monthly premiums and out-of-pocket costs, even if your income would qualify you otherwise.

   Whether you qualify will depend on what kind of coverage your employer offers. If your job-based coverage is considered affordable and meets minimum value, you won’t be able to get lower costs on premiums or out-of-pocket costs in the Marketplace. This is true no matter what your income and family size are. Your employer can tell you whether the insurance plan it offers meets minimum value and can provide you with information to determine if the plan is considered affordable to you.

   If you do not qualify for lower costs in the Marketplace, and your employer does not pay part of your premiums on the Marketplace, be sure you take these things into account before you consider choosing a plan other than your employer’s.