



CONSORTIUM FOR CITIZENS
WITH DISABILITIES

EFFECTIVE HEALTH EXCHANGES CAN PROVIDE NEEDED HEALTH CARE AND PREVENT DISABILITY

A briefing was held by the Center for American Progress on “Maintaining Health Coverage after Life Transition”. The briefing focused on health exchanges of the Accountable Care Act (ACA), Presenters at the forum were university health care researchers and government officials from the Departments of Treasury and Health and Human Services.

Summary Nearly half of all Americans can be expected to go without health care at least once over a 10 year period which can have negative outcomes on individual and financial stability. Triggers for loss of health coverage are reduction of work hours, loss of job, changing jobs, moving or divorce. COBRA benefits are the main option for people who lose jobs based health coverage. Health exchanges have the potential to provide seamless coverage for those who lose health care due to life transition. Only about 20% of those eligible actually enroll in COBRA. Estimates are that 1.5 million will lose employment sponsored coverage in California as employers cease to offer coverage. Purchasing health insurance coverage in the individual market is not currently an option for many individuals going through a life of work transition because 71% of the people cannot find an affordable plan that fits their needs. The average unemployed worker would need to spend 30% of his/her unemployment check on a COBRA premium to maintain single coverage and 84 % to maintain family coverage. Twenty seven percent of the uninsured identified change in employment as one of the reasons for the lack of coverage. Nearly three out of five individuals who had been receiving coverage through their jobs who lost their jobs had become uninsured.

Children’s coverage is also tied to employment changes. Children whose parent loses a job are almost four times as likely to lose insurance as their children whose parent experiences no job loss. One quarter of women offered health insurance through their employer decline in favor of dependent coverage through a spouse .Over three quarters of women who remain married are continuously insured, compared to just over half of women who are divorced.

Disability Prevention Issues Marital disruption increases the risk of insurance loss. Other triggers for losing health insurance are aging out of a plan. Among all young adults graduating from high school and college, 30% were uninsured for some time in the subsequent year and the rate is 51% for those who do not go to college. Nearly 40% of college graduates are uninsured for a period during the first year after graduation because they are more likely to work at small firms. Lack of insurance runs the risk of diminished health that may contribute to disability

Activity There is ongoing study of the adverse effects of life transition without health insurance.

Principle All people should be provided with health insurance

Disability Prevention Issues

Failure to access needed and timely health care can diminish health and contribute to disability.

Short bouts of lack of health insurance can have adverse health impacts due to lack of needed care. Uninsured Americans have a higher mortality and disability rate overall because the uninsured are more likely to go without care. For instance, 56% of the uninsured did not visit a doctor when sick because of cost and 62% experienced at least one cost related problem including failure to fill a prescription or get a recommended test. Thirty five percent of the uninsured does not get preventive screening because of costs. For more than two-thirds of the uninsured, it is not typically a static situation for the U.S. population under the age of 65. With the distribution of the uninsured at 5 to 48 months-

Reaction of work hours can also increase the likelihood of uninsurance (Faille and London, 2005)

In Massachusetts, one quarter of enrolled in the exchange terminated their health insurance. 35% 1 to 4 months-24%, 5 to 12 months 22% 13 to 24 months 13 to 24 months