Happy Health Care Reform Day

September 23rd was the six-month anniversary of the signing of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act. Several key provisions took effect:

- **Coverage for Young Adults:** They may remain on their parents’ insurance policies until they reach their 26th birthday. They do not have to be dependents, do not have to live with their parents, and may even be married and still qualify. But, they may not have access to health insurance at their own jobs.

- **No Discrimination Against Children with Pre-Existing Conditions:** Bars insurers from denying coverage or benefits to children under age 19 with pre-existing health conditions.

- **No More Lifetime Limits on Benefits:** Bars insurance companies from imposing lifetime caps on the amount of coverage provided under a health insurance policy.

- **Restrictions and Phase-Out of Annual Coverage Limits:** Phases out annual benefit limits.

- **Preventive Care with No Co-Pays or Deductibles:** Requires most insurance plans to offer a wide range of preventive health services at no out-of-pocket cost to the patient.

**Advice for New Grads, Their Parents, and Alumni**

1. **Look for a special open enrollment notice for young adults.** Insurers and employers are required by law to notify consumers about a special 30-day dependent open enrollment period. It must begin no later than the first day of the plan year that starts after September 23rd.

2. **Don’t assume it’s cheaper to add a child to an existing parental plan.** Some employers are expected to alter the way they share costs with employees in direct response to the new law. Parents who purchase coverage in the individual market may save money on their adult child’s coverage by purchasing a different plan tailored to that individual child’s needs instead of adding him or her to a family plan.

3. **Watch for letters from your insurer/employer.** You should receive information about how your specific coverage will change under the new regulations.

4. **Look out for rising premiums.** A recent study by the National Business Group on Health found that almost two-thirds of employers planned to ask employees to contribute more towards their premiums.

5. **Look closely at eligibility.** While the new law prohibits insurers from denying coverage to children under age 19 who have pre-existing conditions, that doesn't apply to children applying for coverage in the individual insurance market. They can be denied because of existing medical conditions. It’s also important to note that the new law covers medical benefits and it may not apply to coverage for other care, such as dental and vision.

###

For more information, please contact Meyer and Associates
800-635-7801 • affinity@meyerandassoc.com • www.meyerandassoc.com