



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF FLORIDA EDUCATION FUND

Health Care Reform Seminar Series FAQ

Q: Is Florida's Pre-Existing Condition Insurance Plan (PCIP) the same as an exchange?

A: No. The Pre-Existing Condition Insurance Plan (PCIP) in Florida is a federal-state partnership program offering insurance for those who cannot get other insurance due to pre-existing conditions. Fewer than 2,000 Floridians are enrolled in this program. The PCIP is a bridge program until 2014 when all health insurance companies will be required to cover people of all ages with pre-existing conditions. However, PCIP is not an exchange. Florida has not taken steps to establish the state exchange where Florida businesses and Floridians, with and without pre-existing conditions, will be able to purchase insurance. (<https://www.pcip.gov/StatePlans.html>)

Q: Are many of the uninsured not U.S. citizens?

A: About 9.7 million of the 47 million uninsured are immigrants, both legal and undocumented. The National Institute for Health Care Management Foundation estimates that 5.6 million of these are undocumented, but there are no hard data on that. NIHCM stresses that "the CPS does not collect information on legal status among non-citizens." Immigrants, especially new immigrants, are more likely to be uninsured than citizens. They are also less likely than citizens to use expensive emergency care, according to research from the Kaiser Family Foundation. (<http://www.factcheck.org/2009/06/the-real-uninsured/>)

Q: How does PPACA affect pre-existing conditions exclusion, particularly for children under 19?

A: Currently, insurance companies cannot exclude children under age 19 years of age with pre-existing conditions. By 2014, pre-existing exclusions will not apply to anyone.

Q: I recently graduated college, and I would like to stay on my parent's insurance. Is this possible under the new law?

A: Since October 2010, children can be insured under their parents' insurance up to age 26, if the parents' employer insurance includes dependents coverage. Children do not have to be financial dependents nor live with their parents. Additionally, Florida has a regulation

that allows parents to carry their adult children up to age 30 on their health insurance under specific conditions, but that does not apply to all children and is not part of PPACA.

Q: What about fraud in health care? Isn't that the real problem?

A: Fraud is a problem, but it is a small part of our health care conundrum. About 3% of our \$1.3 trillion health care bill is lost to fraud. Florida has a higher rate of fraud than the rest of the nation. But the lion's share of our health care dollars is spent on complex, high-tech care for problems that could have been prevented. We spend too much on treating people who did not have preventive care or did not have high quality care and end up needing more complex care. The PPACA law also includes provisions to find and stop health care fraud.

Q: What about tort reform? Isn't malpractice insurance the problem with our health care system?

A: "The health economists and independent legal experts who study the issue, however, don't believe that's true. They say that malpractice liability costs are a small fraction of the spiraling costs of the U.S. health care system, and that the medical errors that malpractice liability tries to prevent [are themselves a huge cost](#) – both to the injured patients and to the health care system as a whole. It's really just a distraction," said Tom Baker, a professor at the University of Pennsylvania Law School and author of "The Medical Malpractice Myth." "If you were to eliminate medical malpractice liability, even forgetting the negative consequences that would have for safety, accountability, and responsiveness, maybe we'd be talking about 1.5 percent of health care costs. So we're not talking about real money. It's small relative to the out-of-control cost of health care."

(<http://washingtonindependent.com/55535/tort-reform-unlikely-to-cut-health-care-costs>, Washington Post, 2009)