

New Options for Small Business Health Coverage

The Affordable Care Act (ACA) requires that every State have a health insurance exchange (also called a “Marketplace”) in operation in 2014. A State may operate a Marketplace for individual consumers, a Small Business Health Options Program (SHOP) Marketplace for small businesses, or both. Mississippi will have a SHOP Marketplace for small businesses called *One, Mississippi*. Individuals can purchase health insurance through the Health Insurance Marketplace at HealthCare.gov, and depending on their income, some may qualify for lower costs.

To participate in *One, Mississippi*:

- The employer must have 50 or fewer full-time employees;
- Must attest to offering coverage to all full-time equivalent employees;
- Average of 30+ hours worked per week; and
- May offer coverage to part-time employees.

One, Mississippi is an easy-to-use, easy-to-understand website that helps Mississippi’s small employers interested in providing quality health insurance to their employees. The website to find additional information or begin enrollment as early as May 1, 2014 for coverage effective July 1, 2014 is www.onemississippi.com. Small businesses should consider using *One, Mississippi* because:

- Offering employees high-quality health insurance is a competitive advantage in the labor market.
- Providing health insurance to employees helps small businesses recruit and retain the best talent and allows employees to safeguard their health and provides peace of mind.
- Through *One, Mississippi*, small employers have a variety of tools to help select the right health coverage.
- Small employers can determine the type of coverage offered and how much they contribute towards employee premiums to fit their budget while employees can choose their own coverage.

One, Mississippi - Your Health Insurance Marketplace

One, Mississippi simplifies the process of finding, selecting and enrolling in private health insurance for small businesses in Mississippi. The SHOP Marketplace is designed to provide an online application where small employers can shop and compare for a variety of health insurance plans. Health insurance plans offered through SHOP are classified into one of four metal tiers: Bronze, Silver, Gold and Platinum. Plan comparisons are provided in an easy to understand format. The more the plan pays the higher the premiums. The category has nothing to do with the quality of coverage a plan provides. All plans must provide Essential Health Benefits.

Comparing plans: Bronze, Silver, Gold & Platinum		
Level	Plan Pays (on average)	Employer Pays (on average)
Bronze	60%	40%
Silver	70%	30%
Gold	80%	20%
Platinum	90%	10%

Instead of asking an employer to choose a plan (or plans) for its employees, *One, Mississippi* allows the employer to designate a percentage to contribute toward each employee’s premium cost. Employees can use that percentage amount to help purchase the health insurance plan that best fits their needs and budgets. For example if the employer agrees to pay 50% of the employees premiums, and the premium amount is \$120 a month then the employer will pay \$60 and the employee will pay \$60. The employer can decide to pay a percentage of the premium for dependents but it is not a requirement.

Tax Credits for Small Businesses

Employers that meet certain qualifications may be eligible for a Small Business Health Care Tax Credit. Some of the eligibility requirements that small employers must meet are:

- Employ no more than twenty-five (25) full-time equivalent employees;
- Pay average annual wages below \$50,000; and
- Employer must pay at least fifty percent (50%) of the premium cost for each employee.

Important changes begin in tax year 2014 and beyond, including:

- Tax credits are only available for health insurance purchased through the SHOP Marketplace.
- The tax credit amount increases to fifty percent (50%) of premiums paid for eligible small employers, and to thirty-five (35%) of employer premiums paid for tax-exempt eligible small employers.

Employers should consult their tax advisors for more information or go to <https://www.healthcare.gov/will-i-qualify-for-small-business-health-care-tax-credits/> to learn more about the tax credit and find out if they are eligible.

One, Mississippi Enrollment

One, Mississippi enrollment for employers will begin as early as May 1, 2014 with an effective date of insurance coverage July 1, 2014.

Once enrollment opens, employers can enroll in the Marketplace online at www.onemississippi.com, or through a licensed insurance agent or broker. For more information about *One, Mississippi* please call 1-855-9MS-SHOP or 1-855-967-7467 or send a question to information@onemississippi.com. If you send an email to information@onemississippi.com and let us know you are interested in enrolling, an e-mail will be sent to notify you of open enrollment.