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Federal Government Announces 2018 Rate Increases

Website details proposed increases for health plans

CONCORD, NH - The federal government today published information on proposed rate increases for New Hampshire's health insurance exchange in 2018, showing that consumers in the individual market may face increases of more than forty percent.

"Today's news about rates is alarming, especially for the 94,000 New Hampshire residents who obtain their insurance through the individual market, but unfortunately, it does not come as a surprise," said Insurance Commissioner Roger Sevigny. "A number of factors have led to rate increases for 2018 in New Hampshire and across the country, most notably the continued uncertainty at the federal level. My staff and I have been actively engaged to identify options to lessen the impact on the thousands of families who rely on health insurance through the state exchange."

The [2018 rate information released today](#) by the federal government details proposed increases to benefit plans that are submitted by insurance companies operating on the exchange. (The New Hampshire Insurance Department is prohibited by law from releasing rate information until Nov. 1.) A benefit plan is a specific plan that a New Hampshire resident would select for enrollment, such as a bronze, silver, or gold level metal plan.

Three companies have announced their intentions to offer plans on the 2018 exchange in New Hampshire: Ambetter, Anthem, and Harvard Pilgrim. A fourth, Minuteman Health, also has proposed rate increases listed on the federal site, but those plans will not be available to consumers, as the company [announced](#) in June that it would stop offering plans in 2018.

The information published today by the federal government shows that some of the state's insurers have submitted benefit plans for the individual market with substantial increases. The New Hampshire Insurance Department looks at premiums each year from a market-wide perspective, comparing the median premium for a silver-level plan covering a 40-year-old non-tobacco-user. For 2017, the median premium at this level was \$335; the median premium at this level for 2018 would be \$479, based on the carriers' initially proposed rates. If these rates are ultimately approved, this would represent a 43% increase between next year's and this year's median premium in the individual market.

Today, the Department issued [guidance](#) permitting insurers to assume the federal government will not be funding Cost Sharing Reductions (CSRs) in 2018. In response, insurers might adjust silver level plan rates before the deadline for amending rate filings.

The New Hampshire Insurance Department has taken [action](#) in recent months to call policymakers' and consumers' attention to the impending rate increases and the possibility that companies might withdraw from the exchange in 2018. In June, the Legislature [authorized](#) the Department to create a market stabilization plan, and last month, the Department publicly shared its [plan](#) to reduce rates and

promote stability in the individual market in 2018. Today, the Joint Health Care Reform Oversight Committee authorized the Insurance Department to pursue federal waivers in support of a market stabilization plan, but without relying on an assessment of health insurance carriers.