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Federal Government Announces 2019 Premium Rates

Website details proposed decreases for health plans to be sold in NH

CONCORD, NH - The federal government has published information on proposed rates for New Hampshire's health insurance exchange (HealthCare.gov) in 2019.

The New Hampshire Insurance Department looks at premiums each year from a market-wide perspective, comparing the median premium for an on-exchange silver-level plan covering a 40-year-old non-tobacco-user. For 2018, the median premium at this level was \$504; the median premium at this level for 2019 would be \$470, based on the carriers' proposed rates. If these rates are ultimately approved, this would represent a 6.75% decrease between next year's and this year's median premium in the individual market.

"Despite uncertainty at the federal level, a modest decrease in premium rates for New Hampshire residents is a move in the right direction," said Insurance Commissioner John Elias. "Rates are still high, particularly for NH residents who do not qualify for premium assistance, but we will continue to work collaboratively with insurance companies and pursue other efforts to improve market stability in New Hampshire."

The 2019 rate information released by the federal government details proposed increases to benefit plans that are submitted by insurance companies operating on HealthCare.gov. The New Hampshire Insurance Department is prohibited by law from releasing rate information until Nov. 1, the first day of open enrollment. 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 filed rates with the intention to offer products the exchange in 2019 for New Hampshire: Ambetter, Anthem, and Harvard Pilgrim. The companies have until Sept. 25 to commit to selling plans on HealthCare.gov for the 2019 plan year.

"While other states are seeing the further collapse of their individual market, New Hampshire providers are anticipating a 6.75% decrease in the cost of premiums," stated Governor Chris Sununu. "This is a stark contrast to last year's premium increase of over 50% and is due to our commitment to working with the industry to drive down premiums and make necessary changes to deliver real savings for the people of our state."

These positive trends are the result of a rigorous effort to stabilize and preserve New Hampshire's individual market. This includes: moving the Medicaid Expansion population to the State's managed care delivery system rather than the current Premium Assistance Program; providing flexibility in filing deadlines; authorizing the NH Insurance Department and the NH Department of Health and Human Services to pursue any waiver opportunities; strong advocacy of funding the Cost Savings Reduction (CSR) payments; and a commitment to do to providing certainty at the state level.

The New Hampshire Insurance Department's mission is to promote and protect the public good by ensuring the existence of a safe and competitive insurance marketplace through the development and enforcement of the insurance laws of the State of New Hampshire. For more information, visit <http://www.nh.gov/insurance>.