



For more information, visit the
Insurance Department at
www.insurance.state.pa.us
or call **1-877-881-6388**,
or contact my office.

It's finally happened.

You're graduating from college and headed to the workforce, or you've decided to continue your education. Regardless of your decision, that diploma can bring a sense of independence. But it also can mean that you no longer have access to your parents' health insurance.

In spite of your feeling of invincibility, it's always a good idea to have health insurance in case something happens to you. Medical care can be quite expensive without it.

Some graduates may not be able to find a job quickly, or even if you do, you still may not have access to health insurance. This brochure offers some suggestions for seeking out health insurance to make sure you're covered.

Health Insurance *et* Graduating Students



Know the options

There are several ways for college students and recent graduates to obtain health insurance

The following includes several state programs and other areas for exploring your options.

Health care coverage through your parents

The state recently enacted a law, Act 4 of 2009, that requires major insurers to provide health insurance coverage for dependent, uninsured adult children through age 29 if they are single, a Pennsylvania resident or a full-time student and have no other health insurance. Parents must pay the premiums and the coverage depends on the employers' willingness to offer the benefit to parents.

The law covers new insurance contracts and renewals after December 7, 2009.

COBRA

If your parents have coverage through a large group plan, you may have access to COBRA continuation coverage.

Federal law requires that employees and their families covered under group health plans be offered the opportunity for temporary coverage where the plan would otherwise end.

COBRA requires a "qualifying event" in order to obtain coverage, such as you are no longer considered a dependent child under your parents' health plan. And, it is temporary coverage, generally lasting around 18 months.

In addition, payment of the premium is your responsibility, and some people have found it to be too expensive or they are paying for coverage they no longer need.

Because COBRA and the notice of its availability is the responsibility of the employer, you'll want to check with the human resources department of the company providing your parents' coverage.

Insurance Agencies

You can always call an insurance agent and see what products are available. The agent is also a good resource for explaining what deductibles and copayments apply, and what benefits will be available under a policy.

Some good questions to ask an agent are:

Is this major medical coverage only?

Will the policy pay for all doctor visits, including specialists?

Will I have dental and/or vision benefits?

What is the monthly premium?

Colleges/Universities

You can also try calling your alma mater if you're a graduate. Some institutions have a program that will continue the school's health plan for new graduates with coverage available for up to 12 months and renewable for up to two years.

adultBasicSM

One final consideration is Pennsylvania's adultBasic program.

This program provides health insurance for adults between 19 and 64 who do not have health care coverage and meet certain eligibility requirements.

AdultBasic offers basic benefits including physician services, diagnosis and treatment of illness or injury, in-patient hospitalization, out-patient hospital services, emergency accident and medical care.

While the program has a waiting list, it is reasonably priced, and qualified individuals can purchase the coverage on their own.

For more information, contact my office.

Individual Policies

You also could contact one of the many insurance companies doing business in Pennsylvania to see if you could obtain an **individual policy**. Generally, as young adults, you are healthy, and therefore premiums normally are lower.

You can learn more about the companies that do business in the state by visiting the Insurance Department at www.insurance.state.pa.us and click "Find an Insurance Company."

Ask if a limitation exists in the policy for **pre-existing conditions**, or conditions that existed prior to the policy's purchase and for which there may not be coverage.

Alternatively, a **Health Savings Account** established in conjunction with a high deductible plan can provide some tax advantages, as well as protection in the event of a catastrophic event or illness.

Funds contributed to a Health Savings Account are not subject to federal income tax at the time of deposit, and can be rolled over and accumulate year to year if not spent.

For more information on these accounts, visit the IRS's Web site at www.irs.gov and review Publication 969.

