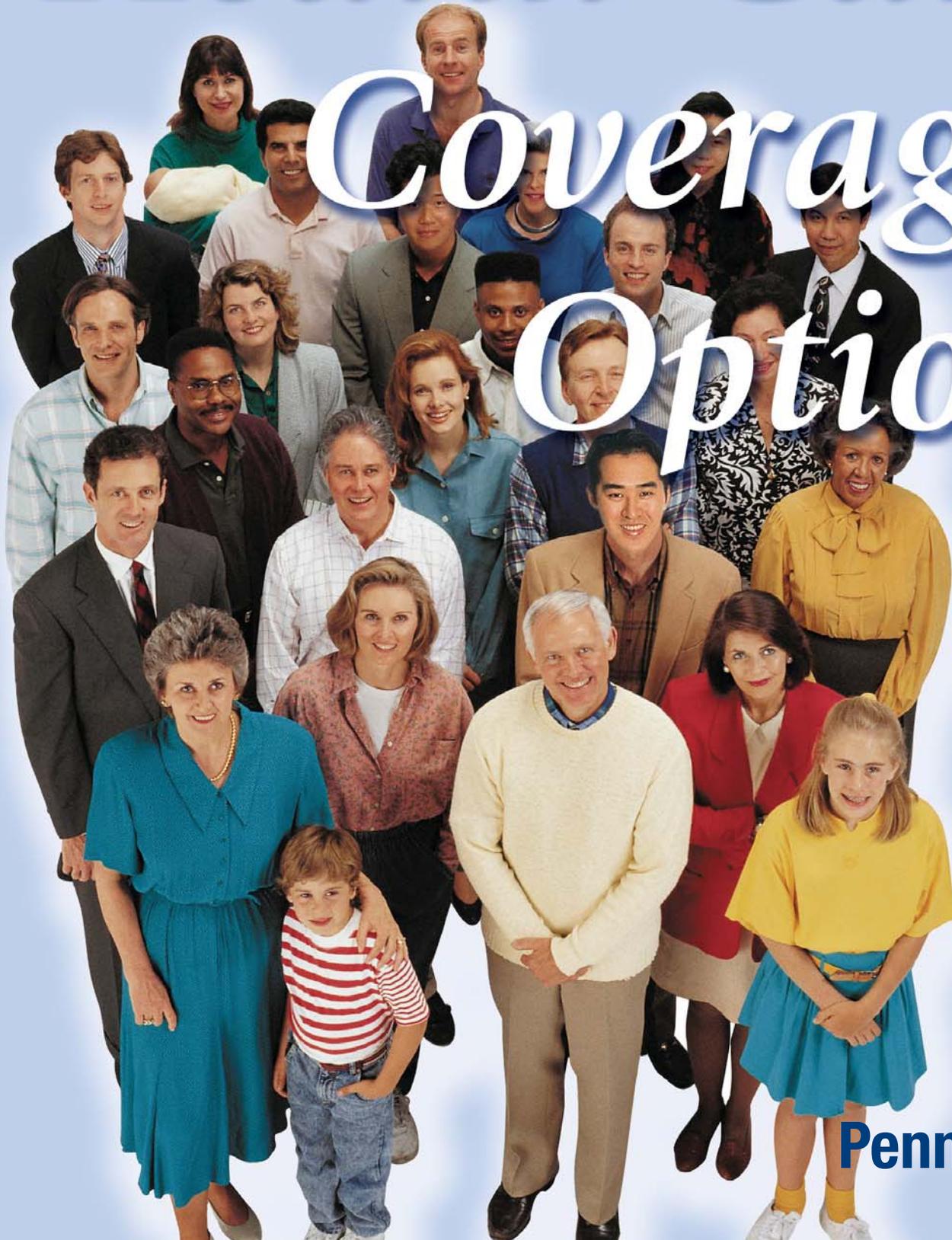


*National Association of Health Underwriters'
Education Foundation*

Health Care Coverage Options



Pennsylvania

Pennsylvania Health Care Coverage Options

As many as 45 million Americans, including approximately 1.4 million Pennsylvanians, were not registered for health insurance during some part of 2004, which is a staggering figure that produces troubling questions about how Pennsylvanians can obtain needed health care services. The National Association of Health Underwriters (NAHU), a professional association of more than 20,000 employee benefit specialists, is extremely concerned about the problem of the uninsured. We feel that a multi-faceted approach to finding Americans coverage will be required, since no one solution will fit the needs of all of our citizens. As such, we have developed this brochure, to outline coverage options for Pennsylvanians. In addition, we have created the online Health Care Coverage Options Database (www.nahu.org/consumer/healthcare), which contains even more information for all of the states to make American consumers aware of all of the health care coverage options available to them.

Pennsylvania's Employer-Sponsored Health Insurance Plans

The majority of Americans receive their health care coverage through an employer-sponsored health benefit plan. Small employer health plans and large group health plans have to follow these different state and federal requirements.

	Pennsylvania Small Group Health Insurance Plans	Pennsylvania Large Group Health Insurance Plans
Definition	Pennsylvania law does not define employer size for the purpose of providing health insurance coverage. Most Pennsylvania insurance companies define a small group as 2-50 employees.	Pennsylvania law does not define employer size for the purpose of providing health insurance coverage. Most Pennsylvania insurance companies define a small group as 51 or more employees.
Issuance Requirements	Guarantee Issue Guarantee Renewable	Guarantee Renewable
Preexisting Condition Requirements	6-month look-back/12-month exclusionary period for preexisting conditions without prior creditable coverage.	6-month look-back/12-month exclusionary period for preexisting conditions without prior creditable coverage.
Credit for Prior Coverage	Required, as long as there is no more than a 63-day break in coverage.	Required, as long as there is no more than a 63-day break in coverage.
Rating and Underwriting Requirements	Coverage for small groups is provided on a guarantee-issue basis and medical underwriting is allowed without restriction with rate variations allowed up to 300 percent of the base rate. Some Blue Cross/Blue Shield carriers community rate or use a modified community rate voluntarily.	The rating and underwriting of large group health insurance policies is not regulated. Such plans tend to be principally experience rated based on the group's past health plan claims experience. Many larger employee groups elect to partially self-fund their health plans and thereby use stop-loss insurance to manage risk.
Regulator (Who to contact in case of a question or a problem)	Pennsylvania Insurance Department	Pennsylvania Insurance Department or the federal Department of Labor

Pennsylvania's Continuation of Coverage Options

This table provides information about health coverage continuation options for people who lose their group health insurance coverage due to a job change, a divorce, job loss or other reason.

	COBRA	State Continuation of Coverage Requirements	HIPAA Group-to-Individual Portability Requirements
Overview	The federal Consolidated Budget Reconciliation Act of 1986 (COBRA) requires employers who employed 20 or more employees in the prior year to provide the option of temporarily continuing group coverage to individuals when their group health coverage is lost due to certain specific events. COBRA applies to both private employers and state and local health plans, but it does not apply to federal government plans and those sponsored by certain church organizations.	States may, at their discretion, enact measures regarding the continuation of coverage for employer groups that are not subject to federal COBRA requirements.	Individuals who have been in enrolled in a group health plan and decide to leave that group health plan and purchase individual market coverage have certain rights under the federal Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA). States must provide at least one guarantee issue option for those individuals to purchase individual market insurance, as long as that coverage is purchased within 63 days of disenrollment from the group plan.

Pennsylvania's Continuation of Coverage Options (CONTINUED)

	COBRA	State Continuation of Coverage Requirements	HIPAA Group-to-Individual Portability Requirements
Requirements	<p>Qualified beneficiaries</p> <p>Generally an individual covered by a group health plan on the day before a qualifying event who is an employee, the employee's spouse, or an employee's dependent child who experience a qualifying event may receive benefits.</p> <p>The length of COBRA coverage depends on both the beneficiary and the qualifying event involved and can range from 18-36 months. A plan, at its discretion, may provide longer periods of continuation coverage.</p> <p>Individuals may pay up to 102% of the premium costs. Employers may pay a portion of the premium, but are under no obligation to do so.</p>	<p>Pennsylvania does not have a state continuation or mini-COBRA requirement for groups of 19 or less.</p> <p>Individuals who are transferring out of any group plan have the option of selecting an individual conversion product, either instead of electing COBRA or after exhausting COBRA coverage.</p>	<p>The various Blue Cross/Blue Shield carriers that serve Pennsylvania have been designated as the guarantee issue option for individuals exercising their HIPAA rights.</p> <p>Individuals must be Pennsylvania residents and have no other health insurance coverage, not be eligible for group coverage, Medicare or Medicaid, and have elected and exhausted COBRA coverage if made available to them</p> <p>Individuals must have at least 18 months of prior creditable coverage, apply within 63 days of their last day of previous coverage, and their most recent coverage must not have been terminated for nonpayment of premiums or fraud.</p>
Regulator (Who to contact in case of a question or a problem)	Federal Department of Labor	Pennsylvania Insurance Department	Federal Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services and the Pennsylvania Insurance Department

Pennsylvania Individual Health Insurance Coverage

Many Americans do not have access to employer-sponsored health insurance and may purchase health insurance coverage privately on an individual basis. Individual policies are regulated at the state-level of government, and requirements for these policies vary widely across the states.

	Traditional Pennsylvania Individual Market Coverage	Coverage for Individuals with Catastrophic Medical Conditions
Overview	<p>Some Americans purchase their health insurance privately, instead of obtaining coverage as an employee benefit. This type of coverage is known as individual market coverage, and individual market health insurers must follow specific state requirements when issuing coverage.</p>	<p>Traditional individual market health insurance is not sold on a guarantee issue basis in Pennsylvania. The various Blue Cross/Blue Shield plans serve as the carriers-of-last resort and offer certain medical-only products to all consumers on a guarantee-issue basis.</p>
Requirements	<p>There are no rate caps in the individual market in Pennsylvania and medical underwriting is allowed without restriction.</p> <p>Carriers are not required to guarantee issue coverage, with the exception of the various Blue Cross/Blue Shield plans that serve as the carriers-of-last resort and offer certain medical-only products to all consumers on a guarantee-issue basis.</p> <p>There is a 60-month look-back limit and 36-month exclusionary period limit for preexisting conditions for traditional individual policies.</p> <p>Credit for prior coverage is not required.</p>	<p>Individuals should contact a licensed health insurance agent in their area or the various Blue Cross/Blue Shield Plans directly to determine the application requirements for the specific plans.</p>
Regulator (Who to contact in case of a question or a problem)	Pennsylvania Insurance Department	Pennsylvania Insurance Department

Health Insurance Coverage Assistance Programs

Many Americans need to obtain health care services but have trouble paying for them. This table provides information about the major federal and state programs to provide coverage assistance to individuals.

	Pennsylvania Medicaid	Pennsylvania CHIP (State Children's Health Insurance Program)	Federal Health Care Tax Credit
Overview	Pennsylvania Medicaid provides comprehensive health care to needy state residents. Individuals must meet specified income requirements in order to qualify for benefits.	Pennsylvania CHIP provides coverage to needy children who do not qualify for Medicaid.	The federal Trade Adjustment Assistance Act of 2002 provides health insurance purchasing assistance for certified trade-impacted workers and certain federal Pension Benefit Guarantee Corporation (PBGC) beneficiaries. The assistance is in the form of a refundable tax credit for 65% of qualified health insurance premiums. Eligible individuals can only use their tax credit funds to purchase specific types of health insurance products.
Income and Asset Requirements	Children (ages 1-5): 133% Federal Poverty Level (FPL) Children (ages 6-19) 100% FPL Pregnant women and infants (ages 0-1): 185% FPL Qualified parents: 33% FPL Supplemental Security Income Recipients: 74% FPL Medically needy individual: 59% FPL Medically needy couple: 46% FPL Aged, blind and disabled: 100% FPL Medicaid eligibility is determined using resource and household size in comparison to resource limits. Resource limits do not apply for families with children in the household under the age of 21.	All children under age 19 with family incomes that fall below 235% FPL that meet other eligibility requirements.	None
Other Eligibility Requirements	Medicaid is available to U.S. citizens, refugees and certain lawfully admitted aliens. Other aliens may be eligible for limited Medicaid benefits if an emergency medical condition exists. Residents must submit proof of identify by providing a social security number or another form of identification, such as a drivers license. Also, recipients must document that they are a state resident, although there is no requirement regarding the length of time that a person must live in Pennsylvania.	Individuals must: Not be eligible for Medicaid or have any other health insurance; Be under age 19; Be a U.S. citizen or lawful alien; and Be a Pennsylvania resident for at least 30 days, except for a newborn. The family's income must not exceed specified levels.	Individuals and their families must either be: Certified as eligible for benefits under TAA because they are impacted by US trade agreements; or Age 55-64 and receiving benefits from the PBGC. Individuals who qualify for the TAA credit and have at least three months of prior creditable coverage prior to separation from employment with no more than a 63-day break in coverage are known as "qualified eligibles," and have special guarantee issue rights when purchasing coverage through a state-elected method.
Benefits	Benefits may include: Office visits; Prescription drugs; Immunizations; Vision Testing and Eyeglasses; Emergency Room Care; Lab Testing and X-Rays; Hearing Testing and Hearing Aids and Mental and Substance abuse treatment.	Benefits include: Immunizations; Routine Check-ups; Diagnostic Testing; Prescription Drugs; Dental, Vision, and Hearing Services; Emergency Care; Maternity Care; Mental Health Benefits; Up to 90 Days Hospitalization in any Year; Durable Medical Equipment; Substance Abuse Treatment; Partial Hospitalization for Mental Health Services Rehabilitation; Therapies and Home Health Care.	Eligible individuals can use their credit funds to purchase only the following types of coverage. Benefits vary by option selected. COBRA Employer must contribute less than 50% of the total premium. Spouse's Plan Employer must pay no more than 50% of the total family premium (including what the employer pays for the spouse's coverage). Individual Market Coverage Individuals must be enrolled for at least the last 30 days before they were separated from the job that makes them eligible for the credit. State-elected option(s): People in Pennsylvania can also use their credit funds to purchase private specified coverage through the various Blue Cross/ Blue Shield plans that operate in the state.
Cost	None	None	The after-tax rates for coverage will vary based on the coverage option utilized.
Regulator (Who to contact in case of a question or problem)	Pennsylvania Medicaid	Pennsylvania Insurance Department	Federal Departments of the Treasury and Labor

Other Health Care Programs for Medically Needy Individuals

The individual states, private entities and the federal government have developed many other programs to help provide Americans with access to medical care. Most are targeted at specific populations, and they serve the uninsured, the under-insured and others in all income groups. Services provided range from free primary care to coverage of specific disease screenings, treatments and medications. Some of these programs just help Pennsylvanians and others offer assistance on a national basis.

Pennsylvania Programs

Pennsylvania adultBasic—Through contracts with four insurance companies throughout the state, adultBasic offers health insurance for adults meeting certain eligibility requirements and who do not have private health insurance coverage.
877-881-6388 717-705-6830
www.ins.state.pa.us/ins/cwp/view.asp?a=1336&Q=543266&PM=1&insNav=I318671

Pennsylvania APPRISE Health Insurance Counseling Program—The program helps people with Medicare understand their health insurance options.
(717) 783-1550 www.aging.state.pa.us

Pennsylvania Cardiac Program—Provides care to eligible children with congenital or acquired heart conditions.
877-PA-HEALTH
www.dsf.health.state.pa.us/health/cwp/view.asp?a=179&q=232452

Pennsylvania Chronic Renal Disease Program—Provides life-saving care and treatment for adults with end-stage renal disease.
877-PA-HEALTH
www.dsf.health.state.pa.us/health/cwp/view.asp?a=179&Q=232459&healthPNavCtr=#4633

Pennsylvania Cleft Palate Program—Addresses the needs of infants and children to age 21 who reside in Pennsylvania and who have a cleft condition.
877-PA-HEALTH
www.dsf.health.state.pa.us/health/cwp/view.asp?a=179&q=232466

Pennsylvania Cooley's Anemia Program—Provides comprehensive multi-disciplinary medical services to patients of all ages with Cooley's anemia.
877-PA-HEALTH
www.dsf.health.state.pa.us/health/cwp/view.asp?a=179&q=232473

Pennsylvania Cystic Fibrosis Program—The program addresses the needs of individuals who reside in Pennsylvania and who have or are suspected of having cystic fibrosis.
877-PA-HEALTH
www.dsf.health.state.pa.us/health/cwp/view.asp?a=179&q=232480

Pennsylvania Dental Clinic Directory—An on-line directory of free or reduced-fee dental clinics serving Pennsylvania.
717-234-5941 www.padental.org

Pennsylvania Family Planning Program—Supports the 197 statewide family planning clinics operated by Pennsylvania's regional Family Health Councils.
877-PA-HEALTH
www.dsf.health.state.pa.us/health/cwp/view.asp?a=179&q=232515

Pennsylvania Genetic Services Program—Provides services to low income individuals who are at-risk for transmitting, affected with, or concerned about a genetic disorder.
877-PA-HEALTH
www.dsf.health.state.pa.us/health/cwp/view.asp?a=179&q=232529

Pennsylvania Head Injury Program—Provides post-acute head injury rehabilitation services to qualified adults who have exhausted all alternative financial resources.
877-PA-HEALTH
www.dsf.health.state.pa.us/health/cwp/view.asp?a=179&q=232536

Pennsylvania Health Insurance Premium Payment Program—Saves taxpayer dollars by purchasing cost effective employment-related medical insurance available to Medical Assistance clients.
800-644-7730 www.dpw.state.pa.us/LowInc/MedAssistance/003670053.htm

Pennsylvania HealthyWoman Project—Women who qualify receive free breast and cervical cancer screening and diagnostic services, including mammograms, clinical breast exams, pelvic exams, and Pap tests.
800-215-7494
www.dsf.health.state.pa.us/health/cwp/view.asp?a=174&q=200875

Pennsylvania Hemophilia Program—Provides comprehensive medical services to children and adults with hemophilia.
1-877-PA-HEALTH
www.dsf.health.state.pa.us/health/cwp/view.asp?a=179&q=232550

Pennsylvania Home Ventilator Program—Gives services to children under 21 with chronic respiratory failure who require ventilator assistance and live at home rather than in institutional or long-term care facilities.
877-PA-HEALTH
www.dsf.health.state.pa.us/health/cwp/view.asp?a=179&q=232718

Pennsylvania Love 'em with a Checkup Program—A comprehensive outreach and referral system that is helping thousands of low-income women and families find prenatal and primary health care for children.
1-800-986-BABY
www.dsf.health.state.pa.us/health/cwp/view.asp?a=179&Q=201057&healthPNvCtr=#4667

Pennsylvania Medical Assistance for Workers with Disabilities—Lets Pennsylvanians with disabilities take a fulfilling job, earn more money and still keep their full medical coverage.
1-800-692-7462
www.dpw.state.pa.us/Disable/MedicalAssist/003670301.htm

Pennsylvania Newborn Screening & Follow Up—All infants born in Pennsylvania are screened for hearing and six medical conditions. This program provides follow-up care as needed.
877-PA-HEALTH
www.dsf.health.state.pa.us/health/cwp/view.asp?a=179&q=232592

Pennsylvania Orthopedic Program—The program provides habilitation and rehabilitation services to Pennsylvania children up to age 21 who have an orthopedic condition.
1-877-PA-HEALTH
www.dsf.health.state.pa.us/health/cwp/view.asp?a=179&q=232606

Pennsylvania PACE and PACENET—PACE and PACENET were developed to assist all eligible Pennsylvania residents 65 years of age or older with the cost of their prescription medications.
1-800-225-7223
www.aging.state.pa.us/aging/cwp/view.asp?a=293&Q=173876

Pennsylvania Pilot Program for Pregnant Women—Prevents gaps in service for pregnant women and provide earlier enrollment in prenatal programs to ensure quality care for pregnant women.
1-800-485-5998
www.dpw.state.pa.us/LowInc/MedAssistance/003671670.htm

Pennsylvania Senior Dental Care Program—Many Pennsylvania Dental Association member dentists offer dental care at a reduced cost to senior citizens on low or fixed incomes through the Senior Dental Care Program.
717-234-5941 www.padental.org

Pennsylvania Sickle Cell Disease Program—Provides comprehensive medical treatment and psychosocial services, care coordination, and education to children and adults with sickle cell disease.
1-877-PA-HEALTH
www.dsf.health.state.pa.us/health/cwp/view.asp?a=179&q=232690

Pennsylvania Spina Bifida Program—The program habitates and rehabilitates Pennsylvania residents who have spina bifida.
1-877-PA-HEALTH
www.dsf.health.state.pa.us/health/cwp/view.asp?a=179&q=232697

Pennsylvania Vaccines for Children Program—Program supplies federally purchased vaccines at no cost to VFC enrolled public and private practices for immunizing children.
1-800-KID-VAC 3
www.dsf.health.state.pa.us/health/cwp/view.asp?a=178&q=242000

National Programs

American Kidney Fund Patient Assistance Programs—Direct financial assistance programs offered by the American Kidney Fund to needy dialysis and kidney transplant patients.

800-638-8299 www.kidneyfund.org/patients.asp

Center Watch: Clinical Trial Listing Service—This website provides a listing of industry-sponsored clinical trials that are actively recruiting patients.

www.centerwatch.com/

Donated Dental Services—Disabled, elderly and medically compromised patients are linked with dentists in their communities to receive free comprehensive dental treatment, including prosthetics.

888-426-7379 www.nfdh.org/DDS.html

EyeCare America—Several programs to help provide Americans with medical eye care at no cost.

800-222-EYES www.eyecareamerica.org

Federal Black Lung Program—Eligible coal miners are entitled to medical benefits to cover the reasonable cost of treatment, services or supplies for pneumoconiosis and disability (black lung condition).

800-638-7072

www.dol.gov/esa/regs/compliance/owcp/blq&a/bl-q&a.htm

Federally-Funded Community Health Centers Database—Federally funded community health centers provide millions of Americans with primary health care treatment.

800-ASK-HRSA <http://ask.hrsa.gov/pc/>

Free Clinic Foundation of America—A comprehensive on-line database of free medical clinics providing individuals with primary care coverage.

[www.medkind.com/scripts/modules/basic/A0.idc?Origin=1004&Status=](http://www.medkind.com/scripts/modules/basic/A0.idc?Origin=1004&Status=Confirmed&Width=90&Height=120)

[Confirmed&Width=90&Height=120](http://www.medkind.com/scripts/modules/basic/A0.idc?Origin=1004&Status=Confirmed&Width=90&Height=120)

Hill-Burton Program—Many hospitals and health care facilities must give free or reduced-cost medical care to those who meet eligibility requirements in exchange for federal funds.

800-638-0742 www.hrsa.gov/osp/dfcr/obtain/hotline.htm

Knights Templar Eye Foundation—Assistance for financially eligible citizens in need of ocular surgical treatment.

847-490-3838 www.knightstemplar.org

Mission Cataract USA—A program coordinated by the Volunteer Eye Surgeons' Association to provide free cataract surgery to people of all ages who have no other means to pay.

800-343-7266

National Organization of Rare Disorders Medication Assistance Programs—Assists uninsured or under-insured individuals in securing life-saving or life-sustaining medications.

800-999-6673 www.rarediseases.org

New Eyes for the Needy—Offers vouchers to US residents in need of prescription eyeglasses.

973-376-4903 www.neweyesfortheneedy.org

Partnership for Prescription Assistance—Brings together America's pharmaceutical companies, doctors, patient advocacy organizations and civic groups to help low-income patients without prescription coverage.

888-4PPA-NOW www.pparx.org/Intro.php

Protecting America's Uninsured—This on-line system provides Americans with links to the U.S. medical schools and teaching hospitals providing free or low-cost services.

202-828-0551 www.aamc.org/uninsured/start.htm

Rx Assist—Gives providers access to pharmaceutical company patient assistance programs.

www.rxassist.org

Rx Hope—Provides access to applications for various national pharmaceutical assistance programs, and also a portal for providers to research these programs.

www.rxhope.com

Rx Outreach—People who qualify financially can get more than 50 generic medications that treat a wide range of conditions.

800-769-3880 www.rxoutreach.com

Sight for Students—Provides free vision exams and glasses to low-income, uninsured children.

888-290-4964 www.vsp.com

VISION USA—Provides fee basic eye health and vision care services free of to uninsured low-income people and their families.

800-766-4466 www.aonet.org/visionusa/index.asp

Helpful Contact Information

National Association of Health Underwriters—America's Benefit Specialists
703-276-0220 www.nahu.org

Pennsylvania Association of Health Underwriters
717-843-0521 www.pahu.org

Pennsylvania Insurance Department
877-881-6388 www.ins.state.pa.us

U.S. Department of Labor, Employee Benefits Services Administration—Self-funded employer-sponsored health plans, COBRA and the federal Health Insurance Tax Credit Program

866-444-EBSA (3272) www.dol.gov/ebsa

Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS)—Medicare, Medicaid, HIPAA and the State Children's Health Insurance Programs

877-267-2323 www.cms.gov

Pennsylvania Medicaid—State Medicaid Program
800-692-7462 www.dpw.state.pa.us/omap/dpwomap.asp

Pennsylvania Children's Health Insurance Program
800-986-5437

www.ins.state.pa.us/ins/cwp/view.asp?a=1279&q=527075&insNav=1

Pennsylvania Department of Health
877-PA-HEALTH www.dsf.health.state.pa.us

U.S. Department of Treasury, Internal Revenue Service—Federal Health Insurance Tax Credit program

866-628-4282 www.irs.gov

Veterans Administration Health Services—Benefits for U.S. Veterans
877-222-8387 www1.va.gov/health_benefits/

Indian Health Service—Benefits for Native Americans
301-443-0750 www.ihs.gov

Health Resources and Services Administration—Database of federal community health centers, Ryan White CARE Act Programs, Maternal and Child Health Programs, and Rural Health Clinic Information
888-ASK-HRSA (888-275-4772) www.hrsa.gov

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention—National Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program, Vaccines for Children Program, and disease-specific information

800-311-3435 www.cdc.gov

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