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Governor Quinn signs \$12B Medicaid bill that covers 342K more low-income adults

By: John Presta
July 22, 2013

[Governor Pat Quinn](#) signed a [Senate Bill 26 today into law](#) that enacts President Obama's Affordable Care Act ([ACA](#)), by making [Medicaid](#) coverage available to all low-income adults in Illinois, to include those without children. The bill-signing ceremony was held at the University of Illinois Hospital's outpatient care center in Chicago.

"This is essentially implementing the Affordable Care Act," the Illinois Democratic governor said at the signing ceremony as [reported by the Chicago Tribune](#). "Some call it Obamacare. I call it, 'I do care.' And this is the way that we, the people of Illinois are going to get more health insurance coverage for at least 342,000 of our neighbors."

Governor Quinn said in a press release that the "initiative strengthens health care system and bring more than \$12 billion in new federal funding to Illinois that does not have to be matched."

Governor Quinn wanted to sign the bill prior to [President Obama's visit to Knox College](#) in Galesburg on Wednesday. Senate Bill 26 was sponsored

by State Senator Heather Steans (D-Chicago) and State Representative Sara Feigenholtz (D-Chicago), makes Medicaid coverage available to adults with annual income below 138 percent of the federal poverty line, which is \$15,860 for individuals and \$21,408 for couples. The measure is expected to enroll 342,000 people by 2017.

According to the [Chicago Tribune article](#), the [state of Illinois](#) will have about 957,000 residents eligible for subsidized health insurance next year in the form of a federal tax credit available through the Illinois Health Insurance Marketplace, the online portal that will be run in a partnership between the state and federal governments.

The Illinois Health Insurance Marketplace, another major feature of the ACA, will launch its enrollment period on Oct. 1 with coverage starting Jan. 1. The enrollment will be through a user-friendly website where individuals, families and small businesses will be able to compare health care policies and premiums and purchase comprehensive health coverage.

165 health plans will be offered by six insurers at the moment. Insurers that have submitted plans for consideration are Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Illinois, Humana Inc., Aetna Inc., Coventry Health Care Inc., Land of Lincoln Health and the insurance arm of the Carle Foundation. Rates have not yet been published.

Medicaid is only available to children, their parents or guardians, adults with disabilities or seniors. Enrollment for the newly eligible population will begin Oct. 1 with coverage starting on Jan. 1.

"In the home state of President Obama, we believe access to quality health care is a fundamental right and we proudly embrace the Affordable Care

Act," Governor Quinn said. "This legislation will greatly improve the health of hundreds of thousands of people across Illinois, strengthen our health care system and create thousands of good jobs in the health care field. Thanks to this law and our shared commitment to increasing access to health care coverage in Illinois, the people of Illinois will be healthier and have a higher quality of life."

Under President Obama's ACA, the first three years of coverage of newly eligible adults will be 100 percent federally funded. This reimbursement rate will be phased down to 90 percent by the year 2020. Quinn Administration officials estimate that more than \$12 billion in federal funding will support the state's health care system from 2014 to 2020.

"The Affordable Care Act gives Illinois the resources to provide critical health care services to a population that desperately needs it," Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services Director Julie Hamos said. "Under Governor Quinn's leadership, we are reforming our health care system so that it focuses on delivering coordinated care and keeping people healthy through better preventive care, not just paying the bills when they become sick."

For more information about Illinois' implementation of the ACA, go to the Illinois Health Care Reform [website](#).