

EDUCATING EMPLOYEES ABOUT THE AFFORDABLE CARE ACT



There is a lot of uncertainty surrounding the Affordable Care Act (ACA) and what it means not only to your company, but also to your employees. With all of the information out in the mainstream media, many employees are confused and concerned about how the Act will impact their insurance costs and coverage options.

At Marsh & McLennan Agency (MMA), we offer turnkey communications resources and consulting services designed specifically to help your employees make sense of the ACA, understand their coverage options, and prepare for change.

“PAY OR PLAY”

Employer Mandate

Under the Affordable Care Act, all employers with 50 or more full-time equivalent employees must decide whether to continue offering benefits as part of their value proposition (“play”) or not (“pay”).

Employers electing to “pay” by not offering coverage will be subject to a penalty of \$2,000 for every full-time employee (the first 30 employees are exempt). Employers opting to “play” must offer benefits to at least 95% of their full-time employees and the coverage must meet both the

affordability and sufficiency requirements defined by the ACA in order to avoid paying any penalties.

Individual Mandate

Employees are also mandated to have coverage or pay a penalty. Employees can secure coverage, either through their employer plans or through public exchanges.

Individual penalties increase over time (penalty is the greater of):

- In 2014, \$95 or 1% of taxable income
- In 2015, \$325 or 2% of taxable income
- In 2016, \$695 or 2.5% of household income for single coverage (family is capped at 3x single)

The government will provide subsidies for purchasing coverage on the exchange to low income individuals that have unaffordable coverage through employers.

WHY ACT NOW

Although employers do not need to comply with the mandate until 2015, employees will very soon need to make decisions about finding individual coverage if they do not already have it. These employees will be looking to employers for information and guidance. Many employers are also implementing some of the required changes, particularly with respect to eligibility, that will have a significant impact on employees.

COMMUNICATION IS KEY

Regardless of what stage your company is in with respect to the “pay or play” mandate, now is the time to implement a robust, integrated employee communications strategy. A well-designed campaign can make it easy for you to bring employees up to speed on the new legislation and what it means for them.

This includes:

- Helping employees make sense of what they’re reading and seeing in the mainstream press, combined with solicitations they might be receiving from insurance carriers and other third parties.
- Minimizing the calls and inquires about the ACA to your Human Resources team.
- Ensuring consistency of messaging.

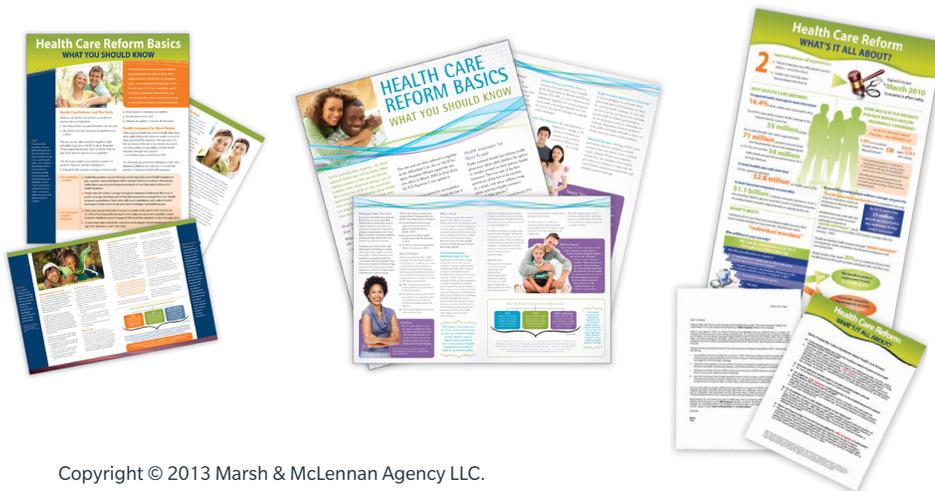
A comprehensive communications strategy can not only help your employees understand what’s happening today, but lays the foundation for more in-depth communication as health care reform evolves.

HOW MMA CAN HELP

In addition to communication consulting services, we offer a Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA) Toolkit.

The toolkit includes:

- A four-page newsletter that gives your employees the basics of health care reform, including information about the individual mandate, health insurance marketplace options, and more.
- Answers to employees’ frequently asked questions that can be used as a standalone piece or as content for your intranet or employee newsletter.
- A concise, impactful letter from your senior leadership that explains how the changes as a result of reform will affect your company and your employees.
- An infographic designed to convey important facts and statistics about the Act in a visually compelling way. The infographic can be used as a poster for the office, a flyer to mail to homes, or a notice to ship to retail or manufacturing locations.
- These distribution-ready materials make it easy for you to share information quickly and conveniently with your employees.



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THE MMA ADVANTAGE

As a leading employee benefits specialist, we have the experience, tools, and resources to help you give your employees the information they need. In addition to our Toolkit, our benefits communications services include:

- Strategic communications planning.
- Turnkey communication tools, including pre-written and pre-designed pieces that can be branded for your company.
- Employee-listening: Focus groups, opinion polls, and executive interviews.
- General benefits communications: Annual open enrollment, health care consumerism, health care reform, benefit plan changes, and ongoing education.
- Workplace wellness communications.

Our communications specialists can develop short- and long-term campaigns that offer you the flexibility to select the approach that best meets your unique needs, as well as your budget.

To discuss a communications project and pricing, please contact your local representation or visit MMAffordableCareAct.com

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