



# PA INSURANCE INSIGHTS

The Pennsylvania Insurance Department Newsletter Volume 2, Issue 9 January 2017

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## A message from the Insurance Commissioner...

As we begin 2017, much uncertainty continues to surround the future of health insurance in America and in Pennsylvania. The Trump Administration and Republican-controlled Congress promise to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act, but the details of what sort of plan would replace the health care law remain vague.



U.S. House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy and other members of U.S. House Republican leadership requested that state insurance commissioner and governors send ideas on what is important for health insurance going forward. Both Governor Wolf and I responded, highlighting that the ACA has helped 1.1 million more Pennsylvanians obtain health coverage and has brought Pennsylvania's uninsured rate down from 10.2 percent to 6.4 percent.

about 114,000 Pennsylvanians currently receive substance use disorder treatment because of the ACA, an important component in Governor Wolf's battle against the opioid and heroin addiction crisis in Pennsylvania. For some people, accessing this treatment can be the difference between life and death.

Another important point when considering any replacement for the ACA is the law's expansion of access to mental health and substance use disorder treatment. Information from Medicaid and a Harvard Medical School study show

Consumer protection for senior Pennsylvanians as well as our youth continue to be top priorities for me and for the department as we move through 2017.

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## A message from the Insurance Commissioner...

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To that end, I am pleased to be assuming the role of chair for the Senior Issues Task Force of the National Association of Insurance Commissioners' Health Insurance and Managed Care Committee. This position will allow me to continue exploring and pursuing ideas that allow my department to better serve consumers in areas such as long-term care insurance.

I also recently had the opportunity to speak to high school students

in Franklin County as part of the department's ongoing Insurance 101 class presentations that introduce students to auto insurance and give them tools so they can be better drivers and more informed insurance consumers.

This program allows us to get out in communities around the commonwealth and start introducing teenagers to insurance at a younger age. My hope is that this program serves as a good introduction so that when it comes time to make

these decisions on their own, they are already somewhat familiar with the process and what they should be aware of.

If you're interested in bringing the program to a school in your area, look for information on page 3 of this newsletter.

Thank you,

Teresa Miller  
Insurance Commissioner

### Commissioner Miller Discusses the Affordable Care Act's Future on PCNC's Night Talk

As we begin 2017, the future of the Affordable Care Act, and with it the individual health insurance market, remains in doubt. The Trump Administration and Republican-led Congress promise to repeal the ACA but have yet to specify what would replace it.

This situation has led to uncertainty both for consumers and for insurers. Commissioner Miller recently appeared on the Pittsburgh Cable News Channel's "Night Talk" program to discuss this issue. Host Ellis Cannon focused his questions on what the changes may mean for consumers.

While not having specific answers for what future health care options may be available, Commissioner Miller urged consumers to sign up for health insurance through the federal marketplace at Healthcare.gov if they did not have other coverage and had not yet done so. She told Cannon that the ACA is expected to remain in effect through 2017, as those plans are already in place. She also said it is possible the ACA will remain largely intact for 2018 because the timeline for replacing

the law is not set and insurers must file their plans for 2018 by the beginning of this summer.

Cannon also asked what parts of the ACA Commissioner Miller would recommend keeping in place. The commissioner said several key areas have been important to Pennsylvania consumers, including prohibiting insurers from denying insurance to consumers with pre-existing conditions, ending annual as well as lifetime limits on covered benefits, requiring free coverage of certain preventive care services, subsidies to help low and moderate income people pay for coverage,

and allowing young adults to stay on their parents plans until age 26.

Under Governor Wolf's leadership, more than 1.1 million Pennsylvanians have health coverage under the ACA, including approximately 700,000 through the governor's expanded Medicaid plan, and more than 400,000 through individual market plans sold on Healthcare.gov. Many of these individuals were not able to obtain coverage prior to the ACA either because they had a pre-existing condition or because they simply couldn't afford coverage.



Commissioner Miller discusses the future of the Affordable Care Act with Ellis Cannon on the January 17 edition of PCNC's Night Talk.

### PID Responds to Majority Leader McCarthy on ACA

In December 2016, Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy and other members of United States House of Representatives' Republican leadership requested input and recommendations from governors and state insurance commissioners on potential health care reforms promised by the then-incoming Trump Administration. Governor Wolf and Commissioner Miller used their responses to advocate for the more than 1.1 million Pennsylvanians who receive health care through the Affordable Care Act's Medicaid expansion and federal health insurance exchange.

Commissioner Miller also highlighted the law's ban on lifetime limits and prohibition on exclusions due to pre-existing conditions. These crucial consumer protection aspects of the Affordable Care Act ensure that consumers are able to access robust and comprehensive health insurance coverage that does not put individuals with chronic or catastrophic conditions in dangerous financial positions. Access to free preventive services, which is also included in the law, allows consumers to access regular doctors' visits and

screenings that can help manage and identify potential health issues before they become more advanced and costly.

"The ACA is not perfect," said Commissioner Miller. "But as we talk about changes to this baseline, I ask that you ensure they result in progress not regress."

In her response, Commissioner Miller indicated that while she supports providing states more flexibility, it is imperative Congress allow states to maintain much of the existing framework created by the federal health insurance law as part of that flexibility. She highlighted a need for stability and predictability in order to help Pennsylvania's individual market and others around the country.

Commissioner Miller also stressed the importance of addressing rising health care costs in order to improve affordability.

To read Commissioner Miller's letter in full, [click here](#).

To read Governor Wolf's response on the impact of the Affordable Care Act and Medicaid expansion in Pennsylvania, [click here](#).

### Insurance 101

Helping high school students have a better understanding of auto insurance is the purpose of the Insurance Department's Insurance 101 class presentation. Developed in conjunction with the National Association of Insurance Commissioners, the curriculum introduces students to terms associated with insurance, such as deductibles and premiums, and exposes them to the important decisions that must be made when purchasing and using auto insurance.

Commissioner Miller continued this outreach initiative with a presentation to students at Fannett-Metal High School in Willow Hill, Franklin County. During the 40-minute presentation, the commissioner used Insurance 101 to demonstrate how different decisions by high school students can impact both their safety and how much they have to pay for auto insurance. The scenarios included offering students choices to make when behind the wheel, some of which result in crashes that lead to higher premiums. Other choices taught students how good grades could lead to a good grade discount on their insurance.

Commissioner Miller introduced this curriculum last fall along with Education Secretary Pedro Rivera. Since then, Insurance Department Consumer Liaison David Buono has made presentations to more than a dozen classes around the state. Teachers interested in having Dave come to their school can email him at [dbuono@pa.gov](mailto:dbuono@pa.gov).

The Insurance 101 presentation can also be found at [www.insurance.pa.gov](http://www.insurance.pa.gov) by clicking on Auto under Insurance Coverage Resources.



Commissioner Miller presents the department's Insurance 101 program to a class of students at Fannett-Metal High School in Willow Hill, Franklin County.

## Commissioner Miller Named Chair of NAIC's Senior Issues Task Force

National Association of Insurance Commissioners (NAIC) president Theodore K. Nickel recently named Commissioner Miller chair of NAIC's Senior Issues Task Force. This task force is part of the NAIC's Health Insurance and Managed Care Committee.

Commissioner Miller has previously taken on a leadership role at the NAIC on issues critical to seniors and aging Americans, having been named chair last year of a new group that is examining how in the future the private sector can better contribute to funding the long-term care needs of our society.

This group, called the Long-Term Care Innovation Subgroup, has brought together thought leaders, consumer representatives, and industry officials to explore ways to improve the long-term care financing options available to those looking to plan for their retirement and their potential long-term care

needs. Commissioner Miller said she looks forward to building upon this work and focusing on more issues important to senior insurance consumers.

"This is an excellent opportunity to continue and expand the work I have been doing under Governor Wolf's leadership in Pennsylvania, to look closely at how insurance issues impact our senior citizens, and work with my colleagues across the country to develop and strengthen consumer protections for our seniors," Commissioner Miller said.

Commissioner Miller has also focused on issues relevant to seniors here in Pennsylvania. In March 2016, Commissioner Miller held a public hearing on long-term care insurance in Pennsylvania to hear testimony from four major insurers requesting large rate increases on long-term care insurance products. Consumers and consumer

advocates also had the opportunity to speak at this hearing.

As a result of this hearing and her ongoing work with insurers, Commissioner Miller was able to announce options for somewhat reduced benefits in return for greatly reducing or even eliminating premium increases for policyholders.

This type of creative approach, Commissioner Miller believes, is needed to make long-term care insurance a viable product going forward. Her goal is to work with insurers and consumers to find more private sector options to meet consumers' long term care needs.

"Pennsylvania's and the nation's populations continue to age, and making sure our seniors have a range of affordable asset protection products available to help finance their long-term care needs will only become more important over time," Commissioner Miller said.

## Recent Press Releases

January 26, 2017 - Insurance Commissioner Reminds Pennsylvanians of Upcoming Open Enrollment Deadline

January 26, 2017 - Insurance Commissioner Appointed Chair of National Task Force on Senior Issues

January 20, 2017 - Insurance Commissioner Presents "Insurance 101" to Students As Part of Wolf Administration Initiative

January 18, 2017 - Insurance Commissioner Promises to Fight for Consumers, Urges Congress to Keep Parts of ACA

January 13, 2017 - Insurance Commissioner Reminds Consumers of 2017 Health Insurance Open Enrollment Period

January 12, 2017 - Governor Wolf, Treasurer Reese Consolidate Investments to Cut Millions in Wall Street Fees

January 10, 2017 - Insurance Commissioner Urges Federal Government to Adopt Regulation to Accept Private Flood Insurance

January 5, 2017 - Insurance Commissioner Responds to Majority Leader's Request, Stresses Importance of Protecting Consumers

December 16, 2016 - Insurance Commissioner Advises Consumers of Open Enrollment Deadline Extension

December 16, 2016 - Insurance Commissioner Urges Pennsylvanians to Plan Ahead for Winter Storms

December 14, 2016 - Wolf Administration Offers Tips on Home Holiday Safety