

JAYSON MEYER: Still time to enroll in a good, affordable health plan

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When I founded the Synergy Foundation for Healthcare Justice last year, I meant it to be a vehicle for assuring that access to health care is available for all. Parents should never have to choose between feeding their children and taking them for medical care. In our work with community health centers, we have seen the good that access to affordable coverage is doing for hard-working families who make too much to qualify for Medicaid and not enough to pay full price for coverage.

(READ: Obamacare signups 45 percent ahead of last year's pace)

Prior to the Affordable Care Act, millions of people with pre-existing conditions were priced out of the insurance market. Now they are able to find good coverage at affordable prices. Since the Affordable Care Act was passed, the uninsured rate in Florida has decreased from 22 percent to 15 percent, according to the Kaiser Family Foundation. This is real progress, but we still have more than 2 million uninsured individuals. As a result of a drastic reduction in the advertising budget for the health exchange, many people won't realize that enrollment is open or even that coverage is available. While the Synergy Foundation can't match the funds that were cut, it is running a series of ads in Central and South Florida to provide factual information. We can't just stand by and do nothing.

Here is my point: "Obamacare" has not been canceled. There is still time to enroll or re-enroll in affordable, quality health plans through the health exchange, but this year's enrollment period will end on Dec. 15. Here are a few more facts:

- The available tax credit reduces premium cost for most people to less than \$100 per month.
- More than 9 out of 10 people in Florida who enroll qualify for financial help to make good coverage less expensive.
- Most people can find plans for between \$50 and \$100 per month.
- \$695 is still the minimum penalty for not having health insurance.

You can enroll at www.healthcare.gov or by visiting a community health center near you. At these health centers you can receive personal help from a trained navigator. Azalea Health has centers in both Palm Coast and Daytona Beach, as well as throughout Central Florida. Family Health Source has centers in Pierson, Deltona, DeLand, and Daytona Beach. Orange Blossom Family Health has centers in the Orlando area, if that is more convenient to where you live or work.

Help is available from other sources, as well. If you have questions about signing up or want to talk through your options with a trained professional, that help is just a call or click away. Consumers in Florida can get free, in-person assistance by calling 877-813-9115 or at www.coveringFlorida.org.

Enrollment ends Dec. 15. Don't leave yourself and your family unprotected from accidents and sickness. Apply for coverage today.

You don't have to choose between health care and your family's basic needs.