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Implementation Timeline for the Affordable Care Act

2010

- Insurance companies can no longer refuse coverage of children because of pre-existing conditions.
- Health plans that cover dependent children must extend that coverage up to age 26.
- Lifetime limits on benefits and rescissions of existing policies because of customers' illness are banned.
- Medicare recipients caught in the Part D prescription drug coverage gap -- the so-called doughnut hole -- will receive a \$250 rebate.

2011

- Brand-name drugs in the Medicare Part D coverage gap are discounted by 50 percent.
- Medicare Advantage payments are frozen at the 2010 level.
- Medicare beneficiaries begin receiving free annual wellness visits and certain other preventive care benefits without incurring co-payments.

2012

- A phased-in reduction of Medicare Advantage payment benchmarks relative to current levels begins.

2013

- Contributions to health Flexible Savings Accounts are limited to \$2,500 per year.

2014

- Most individuals are required to get health insurance or face a penalty that starts at \$95 in 2014 and will increase to \$325 in 2015 and \$695 or up to 2.5 percent of income (maximum of \$2,085 for a family) in 2016 and subsequent years.
- State-based health insurance exchanges are established to allow individuals and small businesses to compare and purchase standardized private insurance plans.
- Premium tax credits become available through the exchange for people who cannot get acceptable coverage elsewhere and whose incomes are above the level for Medicaid eligibility and below 400 percent of the federal poverty level (up to \$88,000 for a family of four).
- Group insurance plans are banned from excluding pre-existing conditions.
- Employers with 50 or more workers who opt not to provide health coverage, and who have at least one employee who is receiving a tax credit for buying insurance, will pay an annual fee of \$2,000 for each full-time employee. However, the first 30 employees will not be counted in the calculation of the fee.

2018

- An excise tax on high-cost health plans kicks in. The tax applies to insurance that costs more than \$27,500 annually for a family and \$10,200 for an individual. For retirees and workers in high-risk professions, the thresholds rise to \$30,950 for families and \$11,580 for individuals.

2020

- The pharmaceutical manufacturer's discount on brand-name drugs for Medicare recipients rises to 75 percent, thus completely closing the "doughnut hole."

Doctors for America is a non-profit organization of physicians and medical students who advocate for changes in the health care system to ensure affordable access to quality care for all.