



Obamacare Mandate Survey: Only 41% Expect Uninsured Tax Penalty to be Enforced on 2016 Tax Returns, 7% Say They'll Cancel Coverage if Tax Penalty is Abolished, According to eHealth Survey

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A new survey of over 500 people who buy their own health insurance finds that 63% say they'll keep their current plan if the tax penalty for going uninsured is repealed; 30% would seek cheaper coverage

MOUNTAIN VIEW, Calif.--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Mar. 7, 2017-- Obamacare's individual mandate (the tax penalty for being uninsured) has only a minimal impact on people's decisions to enroll in a health plan under the Affordable Care Act (ACA or Obamacare), according to a February 2017 survey conducted by eHealth, Inc. (NASDAQ: EHTH). eHealth operates eHealth.com, the nation's first and largest private online health insurance exchange.

"The Affordable Care Act is in a death spiral and the individual mandate has done virtually nothing to prevent that," said eHealth CEO Scott Flanders. "What we hear from customers every day is that they want affordable coverage that actually meets their needs. From our perspective, the GOP replacement plan that was released yesterday has the right mix of incentives and enforcement mechanisms in it to lower costs, attract more millennials, and stabilize the health insurance market."

eHealth's findings are based on a voluntary email survey of eHealth customers who purchased health insurance plans through eHealth.com. For the 2016 tax year, people without qualifying health insurance may be subject to a tax penalty of 2.5% of their total adjusted gross income or \$695 per adult and \$347.50 per child, whichever is greater.

As the 2016 tax filing deadline approaches and the future of the ACA is debated in Congress, over 500 customers who purchased health plans through eHealth answered questions about specific provisions of the ACA and the future of health reform. Highlights from the survey include the following.

When asked about the individual mandate (the requirement for most Americans to have qualifying health insurance):

- 5% said they bought health insurance because of the individual mandate
- 7% say they would cancel their insurance policy if the individual mandate were repealed
- 30% say they would look for a cheaper health insurance plan if the individual mandate were repealed

When asked how they felt about the Affordable Care Act:

- 7% say the ACA is working well and should be left alone
- 37% say the ACA should be fixed rather than repealed
- 54% favor a repeal
- 26% (about half of those who support repeal) say they want to see the replacement plan first

eHealth's also asked respondents to prioritize the issues they'd like to see emphasized in a replacement plan for the Affordable Care Act. According to the survey, the most important issues for people on Obamacare are:

- **#1 - Coverage for pre-existing conditions:** 28% ranked access to coverage for people with pre-existing medical conditions is their top priority
- **#2 (tied) - Flexible benefits:** 16% ranked flexible benefits as their top priority
- **#2 (tied) - Premium tax credits:** 16% ranked refundable tax credits as their top priority
- **#4 Repealing the individual mandate:** 14% ranked repealing the ACA's individual mandate as their top priority

Methodology

These survey results are based on a voluntary nationwide email survey of a set of recent eHealth customers conducted between February 21 and 24, 2017. More than 500 responses were collected. All survey requests were emailed to individuals who had purchased a health insurance plan through eHealth.com, eHealth's non-government health insurance marketplace. The survey asked respondents to self-report whether or not they received advanced premium tax credits (Obamacare subsidies).

eHealth

eHealth, Inc. (NASDAQ: EHTH) owns eHealth.com, the nation's first and largest private online health insurance exchange where individuals, families and small businesses can compare health insurance products from leading insurers side by side and purchase and enroll in coverage online. eHealth offers thousands of individual, family and small business health plans underwritten by many of the nation's leading health insurance companies. eHealth (through its subsidiaries) is licensed to sell health insurance in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. eHealth also offers educational resources and powerful online and pharmacy-based tools to help Medicare beneficiaries navigate Medicare health insurance options, choose the right plan and enroll in select plans online through Medicare.com (www.Medicare.com), eHealthMedicare.com (www.eHealthMedicare.com) and PlanPrescriber.com (www.PlanPrescriber.com).

For more health insurance news and information, visit eHealth's [Consumer Resource Center](#).

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