

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2013

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HOUSE BILL 649
Committee Substitute Favorable 5/1/13

Short Title: Small Group Health Ins. Technical Changes.

(Public)

Sponsors:

Referred to:

April 10, 2013

1 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
2 AN ACT TO MAKE TECHNICAL CHANGES TO THE SMALL EMPLOYER GROUP
3 HEALTH COVERAGE REFORM ACT TO MITIGATE THE EFFECTS OF THE
4 FEDERAL AFFORDABLE CARE ACT ON NORTH CAROLINA'S SMALL
5 BUSINESSES.

6 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

7 **SECTION 1.** Corrections to small group act. – No small employer carrier shall be
8 required to issue the basic or standard health benefit plan as described in G.S. 58-50-125(a).
9 Any basic or standard health benefit plans described in G.S. 58-50-125(a) that are not
10 "grandfathered health plans," as that term is used under Section 1251 of the Affordable Care
11 Act, P.L. 11-148, as amended, shall be terminated on the next anniversary date on or after
12 January 1, 2014, and the small employer carrier shall offer the employer replacement coverage
13 from available small group health benefit plans pursuant to and in accordance with all
14 applicable State and federal laws and regulations. The termination shall be preceded by a
15 90-day notice to the Commissioner, the employer policyholder, the participants, and the
16 beneficiaries. If the plan is issued to a self-employed individual, as defined in
17 G.S. 58-50-110(21a), then the small employer carrier shall offer (i) replacement coverage from
18 available individual health benefit plans or (ii) if the small employer carrier does not offer
19 individual health benefit plans in this State, then individual conversion coverage pursuant to
20 G.S. 58-53-45.

21 **SECTION 2.(a)** The following are repealed: G.S. 58-50-126, 58-50-127,
22 58-50-135, 58-50-155, and 58-50-156.

23 **SECTION 2.(b)** G.S. 58-50-110 reads as rewritten:

24 **"§ 58-50-110. Definitions.**

25 As used in this Act:

26 ...

27 (10a) "Grandfathered health plan" means a health benefit plan providing coverage
28 considered grandfathered health coverage described in 45 C.F.R.
29 §147.140(a).

30 ...

31 (22) "Small employer" means any individual actively engaged in business that, on
32 at least fifty percent (50%) of its working days during the preceding calendar
33 quarter, employed no more than 50 eligible employees, the majority of
34 whom are employed within this State, and is not formed primarily for
35 purposes of buying health insurance and in which a bona fide
36 employer-employee relationship exists. In determining the number of



1 eligible employees, companies that are affiliated companies, or that are
 2 eligible to file a combined tax return for purposes of taxation by this State,
 3 shall be considered one employer. Subsequent to the issuance of a health
 4 benefit plan to a small employer and for the purpose of determining
 5 eligibility, the size of a small employer shall be determined annually. Except
 6 as otherwise specifically provided, the provisions of this Act that apply to a
 7 small employer shall continue to apply until the plan anniversary following
 8 the date the small employer no longer meets the requirements of this
 9 definition. For purposes of this Act, subsection, the term small employer
 10 includes self-employed individuals. Effective January 1, 2014, this definition
 11 shall apply only to grandfathered group health plans subject to this Act.

12 (22a) "Small employer" means, in connection with a non-grandfathered group
 13 health plan with respect to a calendar year and a plan year, an employer that
 14 employed an average of at least one but not more than 50 employees on
 15 business days during the preceding calendar year and that employs at least
 16 one employee on the first day of the plan year. The number of employees
 17 shall be determined using the method set forth in section 4980H(c)(2) of the
 18 Internal Revenue Code.

19

20 **SECTION 2.(c)** G.S. 58-50-115 reads as rewritten:

21 "**§ 58-50-115. Health benefit plans subject to Act.**

22 (a) A health benefit plan is subject to this Act if it provides health benefits for small
 23 employers ~~or self-employed individuals~~ and if any of the following conditions are met:

- 24 (1) Any part of the premiums or benefits is paid by a small employer or any
 25 covered individual is reimbursed, whether through wage or adjustments or
 26 otherwise, by a small employer for any portion of the premium;
 27 (2) The health benefit plan is treated by the employer ~~or any of the covered~~
 28 ~~self-employed individuals~~ as part of a plan or program for the purpose of
 29 sections 106, 125, or 162 of the United States Internal Revenue Code; or
 30 (3) The small employer ~~or self-employed individuals~~ ~~have~~ has permitted payroll
 31 deductions for the eligible enrollees for the health benefit plans.

32 (b) Repealed by Session Laws 1993, c. 529, s. 3.5."

33 **SECTION 2.(d)** G.S. 58-50-125(d) reads as rewritten:

34 "(d) ~~As a condition of transacting business as a small employer carrier in this State, the~~
 35 ~~carrier shall either offer small employers at least one basic and one standard health care plan or~~
 36 ~~the alternative coverages provided in G.S. 58-50-126. Every small employer that elects to be~~
 37 ~~covered under such a plan and agrees to make the required premium payments and to satisfy~~
 38 ~~the other provisions of the plan shall be issued such a plan by the small employer carrier. The~~
 39 ~~premium payment requirements used in connection with basic and standard health care plans~~
 40 ~~may address the potential credit risk of small employers that elect coverage in accordance with~~
 41 ~~this subsection by means of payment security provisions that are reasonably related to the risk~~
 42 ~~and are uniformly applied.~~

43 If a small employer carrier offers coverage to a small employer, the small employer carrier
 44 shall offer coverage to all eligible employees of a small employer and their dependents. A small
 45 employer carrier shall not offer coverage to only certain individuals in a small employer group
 46 except in the case of late enrollees as provided in G.S. 58-50-130(a)(4b). A small employer
 47 carrier shall not modify any health benefit plan with respect to a small employer, any eligible
 48 employee, or dependent through riders, endorsements, or otherwise, in order to restrict or
 49 exclude coverage for certain diseases or medical conditions otherwise covered by the health
 50 benefit plan. In the case of an eligible employee or dependent of an eligible employee who,
 51 before the effective date of the plan, was excluded from coverage or denied coverage by a small

1 employer carrier in the process of providing a health benefit plan to an eligible small employer,
2 the small employer carrier shall provide an opportunity for the eligible employee or dependent
3 of an eligible employee to enroll in the health benefit plan currently held by the small
4 employer."

5 **SECTION 2.(e)** Effective January 1, 2015, subsections (a) and (a1) of
6 G.S. 58-50-125 are repealed.

7 **SECTION 2.(f)** G.S. 58-50-130 reads as rewritten:

8 "**§ 58-50-130. Required health care plan provisions.**

9 ...

10 (b) For all small employer health benefit plans that are grandfathered health benefit
11 plans and that are subject to this section, the premium rates are subject to all of the following
12 provisions:

13"

14 **SECTION 2.(g)** G.S. 58-50-130 is amended by adding the following new
15 subsections to read:

16 "**(b1)** For all small employer health benefit plans that are not grandfathered health benefit
17 plans and that are subject to this section, the premium rates are subject to all of the following
18 provisions:

19 (1) A small employer carrier shall use a method to develop premiums for small
20 employer group health benefit plans that are not grandfathered health plans
21 which spreads financial risk across a large population and allows
22 adjustments for only the following factors:

23 a. Age, except that the rate shall not vary by more than three to one for
24 adults.

25 b. Whether the plan or coverage covers individual or family.

26 c. Geographic rating areas.

27 d. Tobacco use, except that the rate shall not vary by more than one and
28 one-half to one due to tobacco use.

29 With respect to family coverage under a health benefit plan, the rating
30 variations for age and tobacco use shall be applied based on the portion of
31 premium that is attributable to each family member covered under the plan.

32 (2) A small employer carrier shall consider the claims experience of all
33 enrollees in all small employer group health benefit plans that are not
34 grandfathered health plans offered by the insurer in the small employer
35 group market in this State to be members of a single risk pool. No small
36 employer carrier shall consider claims experience of grandfathered health
37 plans in developing the single risk pool.

38 ...

39 (i) A small employer carrier shall not modify the premium rate charged to a small
40 group non-grandfathered health benefit plan or a small employer group member, including
41 changes in rates related to the increasing age of a group member, for 12 months from the initial
42 issue date or renewal date."

43 **SECTION 3.(a)** G.S. 58-50-110(22a) is repealed.

44 **SECTION 3.(b)** G.S. 58-50-110 reads as rewritten:

45 "**§ 58-50-110. Definitions.**

46 As used in this Act:

47 ...

48 (22b) "Small employer" means, in connection with a non-grandfathered group
49 health plan with respect to a calendar year and a plan year, an employer who
50 employed an average of at least one but not more than 100 employees on
51 business days during the preceding calendar year and who employs at least

one employee on the first day of the plan year. The number of employees shall be determined using the method set forth in section 4980H(c)(2) of the Internal Revenue Code.

...."

SECTION 4. The Department of Insurance shall adopt rules to implement this Act.

SECTION 5. Section 1 of this Act is effective when it becomes law. Except as otherwise provided in that section, Section 2 of this Act becomes effective January 1, 2014, and applies to all insurance contracts and policies issued, renewed, or amended on or after that date. Section 3 of this Act becomes effective January 1, 2016. The remainder of this act is effective when it becomes law.