

Q: Do all Affordable Care Act (ACA) plans reset on January 1?

A: Yes. In the individual market, plans follow the calendar year.

Q: When is open enrollment for ACA plans?

A: Federal open enrollment takes place between November 1 – December 15 every year. Some states have slightly different deadlines (through December 23 or 31) to secure coverage for January 1 effective date. So, it's always good to check with your state when you enroll. In some years the enrollment deadline has been extended to January 15, but this only allows coverage to begin February 1.

Q: Does this mean that you can only enroll in ACA plans during the designated open enrollment period?

A: No. If your company offers an Individual Coverage Health Reimbursement Arrangement (ICHRA), this creates a Special Enrollment Period (SEP) for employees to enroll. For example, if your traditional group plan ends on April 30, employees may enroll for May 1 coverage under the ICHRA plan. In addition, if an employee who originally waived coverage experiences a Qualifying Life Event (QLE), an SEP will be triggered which allows enrollment outside of the designated Federal open enrollment period.

Q: Does coverage always start on the first of the month with ACA plans?

A: Yes. Other than for the birth of a baby (coverage starts on the day of their birth), coverage always starts on the first of the month.

Q: Does coverage run through the end of the month when you terminate it?

A: Yes. Even if you terminate your individual plan early in the month, it runs through the end of the month, and you owe the full premium.

Q: Do carriers have enrollment deadlines throughout the year?

A: Yes. Some carriers have deadlines within each month (generally the 15th) in order to secure coverage the first of the following month. It's always best to check with the individual carrier before completing your enrollment to ensure that it will start on the date you expect.

Q: Can ACA coverage be backdated if someone misses an enrollment deadline?

A: No. Plans offered through the individual market always start on the first of the following month.

Q: Will individual carriers provide deductible credit when switching from a traditional group plan?

A: No. There is no deductible credit offered to employees who are enrolling in individual plans.

