

Dec. 15 deadline for insurance effective Jan. 1 approaching

EAGEN — Individuals need to renew or apply for health insurance coverage before Dec. 15 to avoid paying significantly higher premiums or losing access to insurance and/or tax credits on Jan. 1, according to a press release from the [Minnesota Association of Health Underwriters](#)

Individuals who have purchased their own health insurance plans and are not covered through their employer or government plan may lose access to their tax credits or pay significantly higher premiums, unless they actively renew their policy by Dec. 15. Those who do not currently have insurance will lose the ability to secure a Jan. 1 effective date if they do not apply for coverage by Dec. 15, according to the Minnesota Association of Health Underwriters.

“People can’t be so distracted by holiday shopping

that they fail to apply in time,” said Heidi Michaels, an agent and president-elect of the organization. “We don’t want people to be shocked to discover in January that they have lost their ability to choose affordable health insurance coverage or have been renewed at a much higher cost.”

Insurance companies have generally sent out notices, but agents have found that some people have not read them or kept the information in mind. It is the responsibility of the consumer to make the application in time, and that must be done by Dec. 15 if it is to be processed to take effect on Jan. 1, 2015.

“If you have a policy that expires Dec. 31, you can’t wait until the latter part of the open enrollment period, even if you go through MNsure because you would be without coverage from Jan. 1 until the new policy takes

effect, or renewed at a higher premium,” said Michaels.

“The average increase for renewals is 14.5 percent, but for PreferredOne policyholders it has averaged over 60 percent.”

“Some clients have reported that with calls to MNsure it can still take a long time to get simple tasks done,” Michaels said. “If one doesn’t need a government subsidy for health insurance it is possible, and often the best option, to go directly to an agent to purchase private insurance in a much more efficient way and this help is provided to you at no extra cost.”

The Minnesota Association of Health Underwriters represents agents throughout the state who subscribe to a strict code of ethics and serve consumers with a range of insurance products and informed advice on insurance issues.

