

applicable,<sup>1</sup> information described in this subsection is information concerning—

(A) the provisions of such coverage concerning issuer's right to change premium rates and the factors that may affect changes in premium rates; and

(B) the benefits and premiums available under all health insurance coverage for which the employer, or individual, as applicable, is qualified.

**(2) Form of information**

Information under this subsection shall be provided to employers, or individuals, as applicable, in a manner determined to be understandable by the average employer, or individual, as applicable,<sup>1</sup> and shall be sufficient to reasonably inform employers, or individuals, as applicable, of their rights and obligations under the health insurance coverage.

**(3) Exception**

An issuer is not required under this section to disclose any information that is proprietary and trade secret information under applicable law.

(July 1, 1944, ch. 373, title XXVII, §2709, formerly §2713, as added Pub. L. 104-191, title I, §102(a), Aug. 21, 1996, 110 Stat. 1966; renumbered §2733, renumbered §2709, and amended Pub. L. 111-148, title I, §§1001(3), 1563(c)(10), formerly §1562(c)(10), title X, §10107(b)(1), Mar. 23, 2010, 124 Stat. 130, 268, 911.)

CODIFICATION

Section was formerly classified to section 300gg-13 of this title prior to renumbering by Pub. L. 111-148.

Another section 2709 of act July 1, 1944, is classified to section 300gg-8 of this title.

PRIOR PROVISIONS

A prior section 2709 of act July 1, 1944, was successively renumbered by subsequent acts and transferred, see section 238h of this title.

AMENDMENTS

2010—Subsec. (a). Pub. L. 111-148, §1563(c)(10)(A), formerly §1562(c)(10)(A), as renumbered by Pub. L. 111-148, §10107(b)(1), in introductory provisions substituted “small employer or an individual” for “small employer”, in par. (1) inserted “, or individual, as applicable,” after “employer”, and in par. (2) substituted “employer, or individual, as applicable,” for “small employer”.

Subsec. (b)(1). Pub. L. 111-148, §1563(c)(10)(B)(i), formerly §1562(c)(10)(B)(i), as renumbered by Pub. L. 111-148, §10107(b)(1), in introductory provisions substituted “employer, or individual, as applicable,” for “small employer”, in subpar. (A), inserted “and” at end, struck out subpars. (B) and (C) which related to provisions of coverage relating to renewability of coverage and preexisting condition exclusions, respectively, in subpar. (D), inserted “, or individual, as applicable,” after “employer”, and redesignated subpar. (D) as (B).

Subsec. (b)(2). Pub. L. 111-148, §1563(c)(10)(B)(ii), formerly §1562(c)(10)(B)(ii), as renumbered by Pub. L. 111-148, §10107(b)(1), substituted “employer, or individual, as applicable,” for “small employer” and “employers, or individuals, as applicable,” for “small employers” in two places.

EFFECTIVE DATE

Section applicable with respect to group health plans, and health insurance coverage offered in connec-

tion with group health plans, for plan years beginning after June 30, 1997, except as otherwise provided, see section 102(c) of Pub. L. 104-191, set out as a note under section 300gg of this title.

SUBPART II—IMPROVING COVERAGE

A prior subpart 2, consisting of sections 300gg-4 to 300gg-7, related to other requirements, prior to repeal of the subpart designation and heading and transfer of sections 300gg-4 to 300gg-7 to 300gg-25 to 300gg-28, respectively, of this title by Pub. L. 111-148, title I, §§1001(2), 1563(c)(2), formerly §1562(c)(2), title X, §10107(b)(1), Mar. 23, 2010, 124 Stat. 130, 265, 911.

Another prior subpart 2, consisting of sections 300gg-11 to 300gg-13, related to provisions applicable only to health insurance issuers, was redesignated subpart 3 of this part by Pub. L. 104-204, title VI, §604(a)(2), Sept. 26, 1996, 110 Stat. 2939.

A prior subpart 3, consisting of sections 300gg-11 to 300gg-13, related to provisions applicable only to health insurance issuers, prior to repeal of the subpart designation and heading by Pub. L. 111-148, title I, §1563(c)(7), formerly §1562(c)(7), title X, §10107(b)(1), Mar. 23, 2010, 124 Stat. 266, 911.

A prior subpart 4, consisting of sections 300gg-21 to 300gg-23, which related to exclusion of plans, enforcement, and preemption, was redesignated subpart 2 of this part by Pub. L. 111-148, title I, §1563(c)(11), formerly §1562(c)(11), title X, §10107(b)(1), Mar. 23, 2010, 124 Stat. 268, 911.

**§ 300gg-11. No lifetime or annual limits**

**(a) Prohibition**

**(1) In general**

A group health plan and a health insurance issuer offering group or individual health insurance coverage may not establish—

(A) lifetime limits on the dollar value of benefits for any participant or beneficiary; or

(B) except as provided in paragraph (2), annual limits on the dollar value of benefits for any participant or beneficiary.

**(2) Annual limits prior to 2014**

With respect to plan years beginning prior to January 1, 2014, a group health plan and a health insurance issuer offering group or individual health insurance coverage may only establish a restricted annual limit on the dollar value of benefits for any participant or beneficiary with respect to the scope of benefits that are essential health benefits under section 18022(b) of this title, as determined by the Secretary. In defining the term “restricted annual limit” for purposes of the preceding sentence, the Secretary shall ensure that access to needed services is made available with a minimal impact on premiums.

**(b) Per beneficiary limits**

Subsection (a) shall not be construed to prevent a group health plan or health insurance coverage from placing annual or lifetime per beneficiary limits on specific covered benefits that are not essential health benefits under section 18022(b) of this title, to the extent that such limits are otherwise permitted under Federal or State law.

(July 1, 1944, ch. 373, title XXVII, §2711, as added and amended Pub. L. 111-148, title I, §1001(5), title X, §10101(a), Mar. 23, 2010, 124 Stat. 131, 883.)

PRIOR PROVISIONS

A prior section 300gg-11, act July 1, 1944, ch. 373, title XXVII, §2711, as added Pub. L. 104-191, title I, §102(a),

Aug. 21, 1996, 110 Stat. 1962, was renumbered section 2731 of act July 1, 1944, amended, and transferred to subsecs. (c) and (d) of section 300gg-1 of this title, by Pub. L. 111-148, title I, §§1001(3), 1563(c)(8), formerly §1562(c)(8), title X, §10107(b)(1), Mar. 23, 2010, 124 Stat. 130, 266, 911. Prior to amendment and transfer by Pub. L. 111-148, text of section 300gg-11 read as follows:

“(a) ISSUANCE OF COVERAGE IN THE SMALL GROUP MARKET.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—Subject to subsections (c) through (f), each health insurance issuer that offers health insurance coverage in the small group market in a State—

“(A) must accept every small employer (as defined in section 300gg-91(e)(4) of this title) in the State that applies for such coverage; and

“(B) must accept for enrollment under such coverage every eligible individual (as defined in paragraph (2)) who applies for enrollment during the period in which the individual first becomes eligible to enroll under the terms of the group health plan and may not place any restriction which is inconsistent with section 300gg-1 of this title on an eligible individual being a participant or beneficiary.

“(2) ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUAL DEFINED.—For purposes of this section, the term ‘eligible individual’ means, with respect to a health insurance issuer that offers health insurance coverage to a small employer in connection with a group health plan in the small group market, such an individual in relation to the employer as shall be determined—

“(A) in accordance with the terms of such plan,

“(B) as provided by the issuer under rules of the issuer which are uniformly applicable in a State to small employers in the small group market, and

“(C) in accordance with all applicable State laws governing such issuer and such market.

“(b) ASSURING ACCESS IN THE LARGE GROUP MARKET.—

“(1) REPORTS TO HHS.—The Secretary shall request that the chief executive officer of each State submit to the Secretary, by not later December 31, 2000, and every 3 years thereafter a report on—

“(A) the access of large employers to health insurance coverage in the State, and

“(B) the circumstances for lack of access (if any) of large employers (or one or more classes of such employers) in the State to such coverage.

“(2) TRIENNIAL REPORTS TO CONGRESS.—The Secretary, based on the reports submitted under paragraph (1) and such other information as the Secretary may use, shall prepare and submit to Congress, every 3 years, a report describing the extent to which large employers (and classes of such employers) that seek health insurance coverage in the different States are able to obtain access to such coverage. Such report shall include such recommendations as the Secretary determines to be appropriate.

“(3) GAO REPORT ON LARGE EMPLOYER ACCESS TO HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE.—The Comptroller General shall provide for a study of the extent to which classes of large employers in the different States are able to obtain access to health insurance coverage and the circumstances for lack of access (if any) to such coverage. The Comptroller General shall submit to Congress a report on such study not later than 18 months after August 21, 1996.

“(c) SPECIAL RULES FOR NETWORK PLANS.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—In the case of a health insurance issuer that offers health insurance coverage in the small group market through a network plan, the issuer may—

“(A) limit the employers that may apply for such coverage to those with eligible individuals who live, work, or reside in the service area for such network plan; and

“(B) within the service area of such plan, deny such coverage to such employers if the issuer has demonstrated, if required, to the applicable State authority that—

“(i) it will not have the capacity to deliver services adequately to enrollees of any additional

groups because of its obligations to existing group contract holders and enrollees, and

“(ii) it is applying this paragraph uniformly to all employers without regard to the claims experience of those employers and their employees (and their dependents) or any health status-related factor relating to such employees and dependents.

“(2) 180-DAY SUSPENSION UPON DENIAL OF COVERAGE.—An issuer, upon denying health insurance coverage in any service area in accordance with paragraph (1)(B), may not offer coverage in the small group market within such service area for a period of 180 days after the date such coverage is denied.

“(d) APPLICATION OF FINANCIAL CAPACITY LIMITS.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—A health insurance issuer may deny health insurance coverage in the small group market if the issuer has demonstrated, if required, to the applicable State authority that—

“(A) it does not have the financial reserves necessary to underwrite additional coverage; and

“(B) it is applying this paragraph uniformly to all employers in the small group market in the State consistent with applicable State law and without regard to the claims experience of those employers and their employees (and their dependents) or any health status-related factor relating to such employees and dependents.

“(2) 180-DAY SUSPENSION UPON DENIAL OF COVERAGE.—A health insurance issuer upon denying health insurance coverage in connection with group health plans in accordance with paragraph (1) in a State may not offer coverage in connection with group health plans in the small group market in the State for a period of 180 days after the date such coverage is denied or until the issuer has demonstrated to the applicable State authority, if required under applicable State law, that the issuer has sufficient financial reserves to underwrite additional coverage, whichever is later. An applicable State authority may provide for the application of this subsection on a service-area-specific basis.

“(e) EXCEPTION TO REQUIREMENT FOR FAILURE TO MEET CERTAIN MINIMUM PARTICIPATION OR CONTRIBUTION RULES.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—Subsection (a) shall not be construed to preclude a health insurance issuer from establishing employer contribution rules or group participation rules for the offering of health insurance coverage in connection with a group health plan in the small group market, as allowed under applicable State law.

“(2) RULES DEFINED.—For purposes of paragraph (1)—

“(A) the term ‘employer contribution rule’ means a requirement relating to the minimum level or amount of employer contribution toward the premium for enrollment of participants and beneficiaries; and

“(B) the term ‘group participation rule’ means a requirement relating to the minimum number of participants or beneficiaries that must be enrolled in relation to a specified percentage or number of eligible individuals or employees of an employer.

“(f) EXCEPTION FOR COVERAGE OFFERED ONLY TO BONA FIDE ASSOCIATION MEMBERS.—Subsection (a) shall not apply to health insurance coverage offered by a health insurance issuer if such coverage is made available in the small group market only through one or more bona fide associations (as defined in section 300gg-91(d)(3) of this title).”

Another prior section 2711 of act July 1, 1944, was successively renumbered by subsequent acts and transferred, see section 238j of this title.

#### AMENDMENTS

2010—Pub. L. 111-148, §10101(a), amended section generally. Prior to amendment, text read as follows:

“(a) IN GENERAL.—A group health plan and a health insurance issuer offering group or individual health insurance coverage may not establish—

“(1) lifetime limits on the dollar value of benefits for any participant or beneficiary; or

“(2) unreasonable annual limits (within the meaning of section 223 of title 26) on the dollar value of benefits for any participant or beneficiary.

“(b) PER BENEFICIARY LIMITS.—Subsection (a) shall not be construed to prevent a group health plan or health insurance coverage that is not required to provide essential health benefits under section 18022(b) of this title from placing annual or lifetime per beneficiary limits on specific covered benefits to the extent that such limits are otherwise permitted under Federal or State law.”

#### EFFECTIVE DATE

Pub. L. 111-148, title I, §1004, Mar. 23, 2010, 124 Stat. 140, provided that:

“(a) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided for in subsection (b), this subtitle [subtitle A (§§1001-1004) of title I of Pub. L. 111-148, enacting this section and sections 300gg-12 to 300gg-15, 300gg-16 to 300gg-19, 300gg-93, and 300gg-94 of this title, amending former sections 300gg-11 and 300gg-12 of this title and sections 300gg-21 to 300gg-23 of this title, and transferring section 300gg-13 of this title to section 300gg-9 of this title and sections 300gg-4 to 300gg-7 of this title to sections 300gg-25 to 300gg-28 of this title, respectively] (and the amendments made by this subtitle) shall become effective for plan years beginning on or after the date that is 6 months after the date of enactment of this Act [Mar. 23, 2010], except that the amendments made by sections 1002 and 1003 [enacting sections 300gg-93 and 300gg-94 of this title] shall become effective for fiscal years beginning with fiscal year 2010.

“(b) SPECIAL RULE.—The amendments made by sections 1002 and 1003 [enacting sections 300gg-93 and 300gg-94 of this title] shall take effect on the date of enactment of this Act [Mar. 23, 2010].”

#### § 300gg-12. Prohibition on rescissions

A group health plan and a health insurance issuer offering group or individual health insurance coverage shall not rescind such plan or coverage with respect to an enrollee once the enrollee is covered under such plan or coverage involved, except that this section shall not apply to a covered individual who has performed an act or practice that constitutes fraud or makes an intentional misrepresentation of material fact as prohibited by the terms of the plan or coverage. Such plan or coverage may not be cancelled except with prior notice to the enrollee, and only as permitted under section 300gg-2(b)<sup>1</sup> or 300gg-42(b) of this title.

(July 1, 1944, ch. 373, title XXVII, §2712, as added Pub. L. 111-148, title I, §1001(5), Mar. 23, 2010, 124 Stat. 131.)

#### REFERENCES IN TEXT

Section 300gg-2(b) of this title, referred to in text, was in the original a reference to section “2702(c)” of act July 1, 1944, which was translated as meaning section 2703(b) of act July 1, 1944, to reflect the probable intent of Congress. Section 2702(c), which is classified to section 300gg-1 of this title, relates to special rules for network plans, while section 2703(b) specifies the reasons for which a health insurance issuer may nonrenew or discontinue health insurance coverage offered in connection with a health insurance coverage offering in the group or individual market. Section 300gg-2(b) also parallels section 300gg-42(b) which appears in the same context in this section as the reference to section 300gg-2(b).

<sup>1</sup> See References in Text note below.

#### PRIOR PROVISIONS

A prior section 300gg-12, act July 1, 1944, ch. 373, title XXVII, §2712, as added Pub. L. 104-191, title I, §102(a), Aug. 21, 1996, 110 Stat. 1964, was renumbered section 2732 of act July 1, 1944, amended, and transferred to subsecs. (b) to (e) of section 300gg-2 of this title, by Pub. L. 111-148, title I, §§1001(3), 1563(c)(9), formerly §1562(c)(9), title X, §10107(b)(1), Mar. 23, 2010, 124 Stat. 130, 267, 911. Prior to amendment and transfer, text of section 300gg-12 read as follows:

“(a) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in this section, if a health insurance issuer offers health insurance coverage in the small or large group market in connection with a group health plan, the issuer must renew or continue in force such coverage at the option of the plan sponsor of the plan.

“(b) GENERAL EXCEPTIONS.—A health insurance issuer may nonrenew or discontinue health insurance coverage offered in connection with a group health plan in the small or large group market based only on one or more of the following:

“(1) NONPAYMENT OF PREMIUMS.—The plan sponsor has failed to pay premiums or contributions in accordance with the terms of the health insurance coverage or the issuer has not received timely premium payments.

“(2) FRAUD.—The plan sponsor has performed an act or practice that constitutes fraud or made an intentional misrepresentation of material fact under the terms of the coverage.

“(3) VIOLATION OF PARTICIPATION OR CONTRIBUTION RULES.—The plan sponsor has failed to comply with a material plan provision relating to employer contribution or group participation rules, as permitted under section 300gg-11(e) of this title in the case of the small group market or pursuant to applicable State law in the case of the large group market.

“(4) TERMINATION OF COVERAGE.—The issuer is ceasing to offer coverage in such market in accordance with subsection (c) and applicable State law.

“(5) MOVEMENT OUTSIDE SERVICE AREA.—In the case of a health insurance issuer that offers health insurance coverage in the market through a network plan, there is no longer any enrollee in connection with such plan who lives, resides, or works in the service area of the issuer (or in the area for which the issuer is authorized to do business) and, in the case of the small group market, the issuer would deny enrollment with respect to such plan under section 300gg-11(c)(1)(A) of this title.

“(6) ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP CEASES.—In the case of health insurance coverage that is made available in the small or large group market (as the case may be) only through one or more bona fide associations, the membership of an employer in the association (on the basis of which the coverage is provided) ceases but only if such coverage is terminated under this paragraph uniformly without regard to any health status-related factor relating to any covered individual.

“(c) REQUIREMENTS FOR UNIFORM TERMINATION OF COVERAGE.—

“(1) PARTICULAR TYPE OF COVERAGE NOT OFFERED.—In any case in which an issuer decides to discontinue offering a particular type of group health insurance coverage offered in the small or large group market, coverage of such type may be discontinued by the issuer in accordance with applicable State law in such market only if—

“(A) the issuer provides notice to each plan sponsor provided coverage of this type in such market (and participants and beneficiaries covered under such coverage) of such discontinuation at least 90 days prior to the date of the discontinuation of such coverage;

“(B) the issuer offers to each plan sponsor provided coverage of this type in such market, the option to purchase all (or, in the case of the large group market, any) other health insurance cov-