

States Across the Nation Are Proposing State-Level Individual Mandates To Stabilize Their Healthcare Marketplaces

In 2017, Congress passed legislation eliminating the requirement that every American have health insurance or face a penalty. But California's health plans believe an individual mandate is necessary and are urging state leaders to enact a [state-based individual mandate](#) as a way to stabilize California's health care marketplace and protect the significant gains California has made under the Affordable Care Act. A recent [Harvard study](#) found that the removal of the individual mandate could result in 378,000 fewer Californians with health insurance in the individual market, including approximately 250,000 who are currently insured through Covered California. The state's individual market could be facing premium increases for 2019 of 12 to 16 percent as a result of the elimination of the federal individual mandate.

Several other states across the nation are considering legislation to enact state-based individual mandates to protect and stabilize their health care marketplaces. Here's a look at what some states are proposing:

Hawaii: A bill introduced would establish an individual mandate to sign up and maintain health insurance throughout the year, or pay a penalty on individual income tax returns.

New Jersey: Two bills have advanced to the governor. One bill would give the state the authority to impose the individual mandate and collect a fee from people who do not buy insurance. A second bill would use fees collected to help pay claims by people who are very ill, so rates do not rise dramatically for the larger pool of covered people.

Vermont: A bill would establish an individual mandate as of January 1, 2019, but it does not immediately create a penalty for those who don't comply. Instead, a working group would look at administration and enforcement options and report back to the Legislature later in 2018.

Washington: A bill would establish a task force to examine how an individual mandate in the state would work.

District of Columbia: District officials approved a resolution recommending adoption of an individual mandate. The proposal would mirror the Affordable Care Act's mandate. The amount of the penalty would be 2.5% of family income or \$695 per adult. The D.C. council would still have to approve the measure.

Connecticut: Two bills were introduced to establish an individual mandate. One bill would provide a choice — pay the penalty or put 9.66% of income each month into a health savings account managed by the state. Residents could withdraw money from their accounts for health care expenses. The bills were shelved in a committee, but the Senate leader may revive the proposal.

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