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Small Businesses' Input About Health Insurance Costs Is Requested

May 15, 2018 JUNEAU — The Alaska Division of Insurance, in coordination with organizations such as the Alaska Chamber of Commerce and the National Federation of Independent Businesses, is asking small business employers in Alaska to complete a [survey](#) to inform strategies for lowering health insurance premiums in the small group market. The division is collecting data as a first step towards applying for a second Affordable Care Act 1332 Innovation Waiver to reduce barriers to affordable health insurance for small businesses.

“Because the focus of Alaska’s second waiver will be on reducing health care coverage costs in the small group market, we’re asking for input from those who are most familiar with the challenges and potential solutions—small business employers,” said Lori Wing-Heier, director of the Division of Insurance.

Employers with 50 employees or fewer can buy health insurance plans through the small group market. However, premiums in that market have increased by an average of more than 31 percent over the past two years.

As has been widely reported, Alaska has among the highest health care costs in the nation. Simultaneous to the broader effort to advance a comprehensive, long-term solution, the Division of Insurance is identifying and implementing innovations that will have a measurable impact on health insurance markets in the near term.

The state’s first 1332 Innovation Waiver provided funding for the [Alaska Reinsurance Program](#), which reduced premiums by approximately 20 percent in the individual health insurance market for 2018. The waiver passes approximately \$332 million savings from reduced federal tax credits to the state government to offset the price of insuring those with high-cost medical conditions.

The Division of Insurance is an agency housed within the Alaska Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development (DCCED) tasked with protecting consumers in Alaska. For additional information about the division, visit <https://www.commerce.alaska.gov/web/ins/>. For information about DCCED and its other agencies, visit commerce.alaska.gov.

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