The Affordable Care Act (ACA) is driving a number of changes to the health care system, and Health Care for the Homeless (HCH) frontline staff play a vital role in helping ensure ongoing services for those experiencing homelessness during this time of change and uncertainty. In states expanding Medicaid to non-disabled adults who earn at or below 138% of the federal poverty level (about $16,000 for an individual), HCH’s are well-suited to provide education, services and assistance in accessing both health insurance and medical care.

What does the ACA ("Obamacare") really do for our clients?

- Improves access to health care by expanding new insurance options, increasing service locations & bolstering the number of providers
- Provides protections against health insurance abuses
- Reduces health disparities, increase care coordination & improve access to data

What is the role of HCH?

- Continue providing high-quality health care services to people experiencing homelessness, regardless of their insurance status
- Enroll clients in health insurance plans (most likely Medicaid) and connect them to health care
- Help clients navigate a sometimes uncertain or imperfect system, as HCH has always done

What changes can I expect in the short term?

- New training opportunities to assist individuals with enrollment in Medicaid (or other insurance)
- New staff positions that focus on outreach and enrollment
- The ability to connect clients to a wider range of health services, like specialty care
- Assessments for new patient capacity and the ability to see more clients
- New partnerships with other health and housing providers

What changes can I expect in the long term?

- More revenue for your organization through increased billing
- Better access to a broader range of care, improved health, and fewer unmet treatment needs
- Fewer individuals becoming homeless due to health problems

Where can I get assistance or more information?

- Local call centers and dedicated professionals can assist with ACA enrollment
- Your project’s leadership will have the latest developments in your area (ask them about it!)
- Government websites: www.healthcare.gov or your state’s health reform site
- Your state’s Primary Care Association

Make sure you are involved! Each state has different plans, goals and objectives. Make sure your agency is involved in the planning in order to meet the needs of your clients.