

Studies take early look at health law's premiums

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This Oct. 11, 2012 file photo shows a basket of medical supplies await storage in Brookhaven, Miss. The No. 1 question about President Barack Obama's health care law is whether consumers will be able to afford the coverage. Now the answer is coming in: The biggest study yet of premiums posted publicly by states finds that the sticker price will average about \$270 a month if you're a 21-year-old buying a mid-range policy. That's before government tax credits that will act like a discount for most people, bringing down the cost based on their income. (AP Photo/Rogelio V. Solis, File)

Coverage under President Barack Obama's health care law won't be cheap, but two independent private studies show that cost-conscious consumers hunting for lower premiums will have plenty of options.

A study released Thursday by the nonprofit Kaiser Family Foundation found that government tax credits would lower the sticker price on a benchmark "silver" policy to a little over \$190 a month for single people making about \$29,000, regardless of the person's age.

By pairing their tax credit with a stripped-down "bronze" policy, some younger consumers can bring their premiums down to the range of \$100 to \$140 a month. Older people can drive their monthly cost even lower—well below \$100—if they are willing to take a chance with higher deductibles and copays.

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