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New Site for Consumers on the Health Care Law

By [ANAHAD O'CONNOR](#)

A coalition of health care and advocacy groups started a new Web site this week that seeks to help Americans understand what can seem like confusing changes that are beginning to occur under the new health care law.

The new site, called healthcareandyou.org, is intended to steer clear of the heated politics behind the legislation and focus instead on what the plan means for consumers. People who log on to the site can click on their state, their age group, and their circumstances — like whether they're a small business owner or not — and find explanations of the law's intricacies and a timeline pointing out when various provisions will take effect.

Nancy LeaMond, the head of [AARP](#), one of the groups that created the site, said it was intended to provide “simple, straightforward information” about the health care legislation, the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, which was signed into law last March and is being phased in gradually through 2014.

But the site, which began on Tuesday, faces something of a challenge: studies show that many Americans who think they understand how the law works are thoroughly misinformed, and some are not even aware it is still in effect.

One poll released by the Kaiser Family Foundation last week found that about 20 percent of people believe — wrongly — that the law was killed when House Republicans voted to repeal it earlier this year, and 26 percent said they didn't know enough to say whether it was still the law or not. While a bill to repeal the act was approved by House Republicans in January, it was seen as largely symbolic since a similar measure would be unlikely to clear the Democratic-controlled Senate. [President Obama](#) has also said he would veto the bill if it reached his desk.

The National Council on Aging last year also found that 42 percent of seniors believed, incorrectly, that the law would cut their basic [Medicare](#) benefits, while another 37 percent said they did not know how it would affect their coverage.

The creators of the site said they hoped to dispel confusion over the law's details by allowing people to access information tailored to them and, eventually, by adding a chat feature where users can ask specific questions and get immediate feedback from experts. The site was also designed to provide details to doctors and other health care providers who take questions about the law from patients.

“Our patients often look to family physicians for more than just a diagnosis and a prescription,” Roland Goertz, president of the American Academy of Family Physicians, said in a statement. “By teaming up with our colleagues in the coalition, we offer a valuable resource that doctors can share with patients.”

Six other groups, in addition to the family physicians’ academy and AARP, make up the coalition that created the site. Among them are the [American Medical Association](#); the American Nurses Association; the Catholic Health Association; the National Community Pharmacists Association; the American College of Physicians; and the [American Cancer Society’s Cancer](#) Action Network. Several of these groups supported the health care law itself.