Calif. middle class feels health insurance squeeze

By Christopher Cadelago and Phillip Reese, Sacramento Bee

Dawn and Nick LaPolla of Fair Oaks are solidly middle class, and they aren’t uninsured.

Yet their required switch to a new health insurance plan under federal changes puts them at a financial crossroads.

If they earn less than $94,200 a year, the family of four’s preferred plan through the California health exchange would cost about $750 a month. But if they make even slightly more, they’ll pay about $1,040. That’s because they would exceed the threshold to qualify for federal subsidies. Their current high-deductible plan, which expires in two months, costs $573 a month.

Unlike wealthier state residents who more easily can afford the new, often more comprehensive plans, or lower-income people aided by government subsidies, the LaPollas are part of a sizable segment of Californians slowly coming to grips with dedicating a greater percentage of their income to new policies.

For the vast majority of residents, the Covered California subsidy isn’t an issue. Low-income residents receive health insurance through Medi-Cal. Millions of others have insurance subsidized by their employer.

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