

Vermont Legislative Joint Fiscal Office

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ISSUE BRIEF

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Employers' Health Care Fund Contribution ("Employer Assessment")

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History

Act 191 of 2006 – the act that also created Catamount Health – required the Vermont Department of Labor (VT DOL) to collect the *Employers' Health Care Fund Contribution* (a.k.a. "employer assessment"). According to the statute, it was established "to provide a fair and reasonable method for sharing health care costs with employers who do not offer their employees health care coverage."¹ This process is done in conjunction with the current unemployment insurance quarterly reporting of wages and UI taxes.

Who pays? Employers, for their "uncovered employees."

- 21 V.S.A. chapter 25 requires an employer to pay the contribution for "uncovered employees," which means:
 - An employee of an employer who does not offer to pay any part of the cost of health care coverage for its employees;
 - An employee who is not eligible for health care coverage offered by an employer to any other employees; or
 - An employee who is offered and is eligible for coverage by the employer but elects not to accept the coverage and either:
 - is enrolled in Medicaid
 - *this language added through Act 174 of 2014 (Misc. Tax Bill)*
 - has no other health care coverage under either a private or public plan except Medicaid; or
 - has purchased health insurance coverage as an individual through the Vermont Health Benefit Exchange.
- The Department of Labor's (DOL) rules also require employers to pay the contribution for a "seasonal" or "part-time" employee who:
 - Has Medicaid; or
 - Has no coverage; or
 - Has worked 21 weeks or more (seasonal employees); or
 - Works more than 389 hours in the reporting quarter (part-time employees).
- DOL's rules treat an employee as "uncovered" when no declaration of coverage form is on file from an employee who declines the employer's offer of health coverage.

¹ 21 V.S.A. § 2001

How is the contribution calculated and paid?

The DOL website has a useful employer health care reporting FAQ to help employers calculate their contribution. The FAQ can be located at:

<http://labor.vermont.gov/InfoCenter/FrequentlyAskedQuestions/EmployerHealthCareReportingFAQ/tabid/1165/Default.aspx>

The contribution is paid on the number of uncovered FTEs as determined above. The rules set forth a methodology for calculating FTEs and hours worked and provide worksheets to help employers determine their contribution.² In addition, the law allows for a certain number of FTEs to be exempted from the calculation. Currently that exemption is four FTEs.

❖ *Full-time equivalent* – The number of employees expressed as the number of employee hours worked in Vermont during a calendar quarter divided by 520. The FTE calculation is based on a 40-hour work week.

How much is the employer assessment and how much money has it raised?

- The current contribution is \$140.84 per uncovered FTE / per quarter.
- As of January 1, 2015, the amount of the contribution is “adjusted by a percentage equal to any percentage change in premiums for the second lowest cost silver-plan in the Vermont Health Benefit Exchange.”³ Prior to 2014, the contribution was indexed to the increase in premiums for Catamount Health. If premiums decrease, however, the contribution will not also decrease.

Employer Assessment & Revenues, 2008-Present

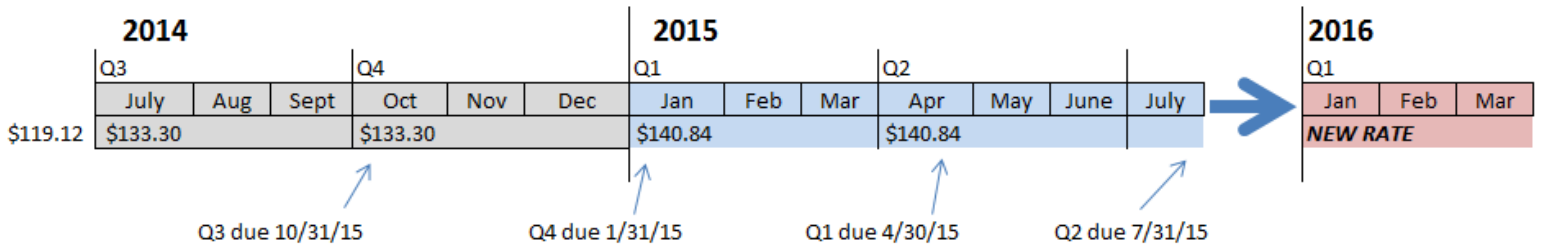
Historical Revenues		Qtly Contribution Per uncovered FTE	
2008	\$5,782,143	\$91.25	
2009	\$6,020,213		
2010	\$7,113,457	\$101.74	
2011	\$9,316,000	\$113.03	
2012	\$11,168,000	\$119.12	
2013	\$11,886,600		
2014	\$12,995,400	\$133.30	- Increased July 2014
2015 est.	\$15,640,000	\$140.84	- Calendar Year 2015
2016 est.	\$16,800,000	TBD	- Calendar Year 2016

Revenues from the employer assessment are deposited into the State Health Care Resources Fund which is used to fund state health care programs including Medicaid and the Vermont Health Connect.

² <http://labor.vermont.gov/Portals/0/UI/HC-1.pdf>

³ 21 V.S.A. § 2003(b)

EMPLOYER ASSESSMENT RATE & INDEX VISUAL



Indexes at the beginning of Calendar year.

Index adjusted by a percentage equal to the percentage change in premiums for the 2nd lowest cost silver-level plan in the Vermont benefit exchange.

EMPLOYER ASSESSMENT DATA

Data from Vermont Department of Labor

FY 2013 - Average Quarterly Collection data

Employee Breakdown of Reporting	Avg. # employers reporting some FTE's	Avg. Reported FTE	Actual Contributions Due*	Avg. Employer Contribution
1-9	556	1,326	\$631,812	\$1,137
10-19	691	2,839	\$1,352,727	\$1,958
20-49	606	5,044	\$2,403,484	\$3,968
50-249	413	8,208	\$3,910,948	\$9,481
250+	100	7,645	\$3,642,570	\$36,335
TOTAL	2,365	25,062	\$11,941,542	

** Note: Revenues don't reconcile with other chart. These are contributions "due" versus "collected".*