

Market Impacts & Opportunities

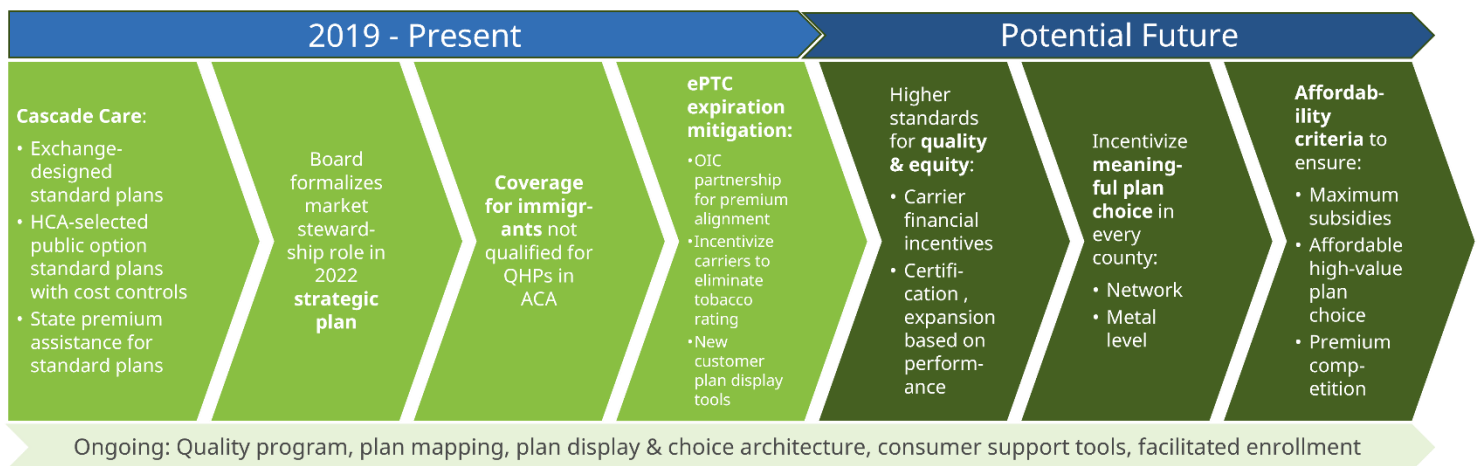
Challenge: While high premiums and high cost sharing are perennial primary barriers to Washingtonians being insured and accessing care, federal action exacerbates these challenges. The combined impact of ePTC expiration, federal regulations, and HR 1 is expected to increase premiums, reduce Exchange enrollment by 35% to 50%, and worsen the risk pool—threatening the stability of the individual market.

Opportunity for Discussion:

Progress Exchange market stewardship to protect customer enrollment & market stability.

What might stronger Exchange market stewardship look like to meet this moment?: Certification authority to curate the market to maximize state and federal subsidies, risk adjustment variables, and meaningful plan choices.

Exchange Market Stewardship



Background & Context: Exchange Board, Exchange committees and stakeholders all provided feedback focused on market stewardship to address market viability and affordability.

- The Exchange Board requested at its 2024 retreat opportunities to sharpen Cascade Care tools. Stakeholder feedback helped refine policy opportunities that include:
 - Fully standardize cost sharing on the Exchange for an apples-to-apples comparison of plans that differentiate choice based on premium, provider network and quality.
 - Directionally align public option with 2025 legislation that sets a hospital reference price specific for PEGB & SEGB plans to meaningfully lower QHP premiums.
 - Strengthen public option provider participation requirements to address barriers to accessing public option plans and providers.
 - Target plan design and state premium assistance to protect access to coverage and care for customers increasingly at risk of being uninsured.

- Exchange Board members shared in pre-retreat Clarity Consulting interviews they would like to see the Exchange focus on affordability levers as a core component of preventing a market death spiral. Board ideas to control premium growth and safeguard subsidies include selective purchasing and reference pricing/public option strengthening.
- A variety of sectors and stakeholders represented on Exchange committees encouraged the Board to curate the market in a way that gives the Exchange more control over the plans offered to maximize state premium assistance and federal premium tax credits, and ensure consumer plan choice that is based on quality, affordable provider networks. This may include strengthening Board certification authority to include consideration of affordability and meaningful plan choice in every county.