

So Are Premiums Up or Down?

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Originally published on Thu August 7, 2014 7:22 am

Some premiums on the federal health exchange for 2015 are going up. Some are going down. That's all we really know right now.

So, how did Florida's Office of Insurance Regulation come up with its 13 percent premium hike forecast issued in its press release earlier this week?

The agency used premiums for silver plans -- because they're the most popular. The office averaged the premiums of all of them and compared this year to next year.

The trouble is, a lot fewer people bought the high-dollar plans than bought the low-dollar plans. But the way the state did the math, that doesn't show up, says AvalereHealth's Elizabeth Carpenter.

"When we look at 2015 premiums, unfortunately, the average doesn't always tell us how consumers will be impacted," she said.

Think about a store that sells a wide variety of wines, from everyday table wine to Gold Medal Bordeaux. If you figure the average price on all the brands in the store, it may be \$30. Most people probably pay \$10.

In this case, the "average" price isn't very helpful.

Bear in mind that neither the state nor the feds have made the data public, so all consumers can rely on are press releases. Until they share the real prices, nobody can really do the math.



Credit Florida Office of Insurance Regulation