

## IRS Issues New Policy to Protect Victims of Domestic Violence



Last week, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) issued important guidance to address a serious problem that has prevented domestic abuse victims from accessing health insurance through the federal insurance marketplaces.

Federal rules required that legally married women count their husbands' income when applying for health insurance through the marketplace—even when the woman was estranged from the spouse, living separately, or had no access to their husband's income. This meant that women who by themselves would qualify for financial help to buy coverage were unable to get it.

The IRS has now implemented policy that says that even if the survivor is still married, they can be eligible for financial help for health insurance if they live apart from their spouse at the time they file taxes and indicate on their taxes that they are unable to file jointly due to domestic abuse. These women have also been given a special enrollment period to get coverage.

At this time, it is unclear what documentation will be needed, if any, to prove domestic violence.