

# Calif.'s 'gig economy' could be hit by ACA repeal

By Sammy Caiola, Sacramento Bee

On a recent Friday at Old Soul Coffee Roasters in Sacramento, actor Ian Hopps hunched over his laptop as he edited a flier for an upcoming performance with the Davis Shakespeare Ensemble. He had just come off a shift from the East Sacramento restaurant where he waits tables and was killing time before his curtain call for "The Tempest" later that evening.

The 26-year-old lives paycheck to paycheck as a freelance actor/part-time server and doesn't get health benefits through either position, he said. After turning 26 and becoming ineligible for his parents' insurance, he enrolled in a Medi-Cal plan, made available only after the Affordable Care Act became the law of the land in 2010.

With private insurance out of his price range, Hopps said he was relieved to have an accessible option and not have to "bite the bullet" of taking on a full-time job for benefits. As Medi-Cal and other federal health programs face an uncertain future, part-time and self-employed workers such as Hopps wonder how they'll pursue their careers, and stay covered, if the law is repealed.

More than any other state, California embraced former President Barack Obama's Affordable Care Act, expanding eligibility for the low-income Medicaid program to childless adults and creating the Covered California exchange, which offers subsidized plans to people who can't afford private insurance. About 3.7 million people have enrolled in Medicaid since the health law was implemented, and 1.3 million now have plans through Covered California.

**Read the whole story**