



Regional Update from HHS Regional Director Susan Johnson

Region 10 - Alaska, Idaho, Oregon, and Washington

January 2012

Dear Colleagues:

In this new year, I want to use my newsletter to keep you updated about HHS's healthcare reform efforts and corresponding opportunities. I also want to use this newsletter as a platform to share information about the resources I learn about during my travels throughout Region 10.

This month, I would like to welcome David Dickinson to Region 10. He will serve as the Regional Administrator for the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). Prior to his position as Regional Administrator for Region 10, David served as the Director of the Division of Behavioral Health and Recovery in the Department of Social and Health Services in the State of Washington. I am thrilled to have David here to assist with our efforts to address suicide and mental health issues in Region 10.

Sincerely,

Susan



Save the Date

- The first Region 10 Tribal Affairs Quarterly Call for 2012 will take place on January 26. More details coming soon.
- The Region 10 2012 HHS Tribal Consultation will be held in Seattle on March 29 and 30. More details coming soon.

Recent HHS Announcements

HHS to give states more flexibility to implement health reform.

HHS recently [released a bulletin](#) outlining proposed policies that will give states more flexibility and freedom to implement the Affordable Care Act (ACA). The ACA ensures all Americans have access to quality, affordable health insurance. To achieve this goal, the law ensures that health insurance plans offered in the individual and small group markets, both inside and outside of the Affordable Insurance Exchanges, offer a comprehensive package of items and services, known as "essential health benefits."

Public input on this proposal is encouraged. [Comments are due by January 31, 2012](#) and can be sent to: EssentialHealthBenefits@cms.hhs.gov.



Partnership for Patients initiative to improve hospital care.

Hospitals across the country will have new resources and support to make health care safer and less costly by targeting and reducing the millions of preventable injuries and complications from healthcare acquired conditions, HHS recently announced. As a part of the Partnership for Patients initiative, a nationwide public-private collaboration to improve the quality, safety, and affordability of health care for all Americans, \$218 million will go to 26 state, regional, national, or hospital system organizations. As Hospital Engagement Networks, these organizations will help identify solutions already working to reduce healthcare acquired conditions, and work to spread them to other hospitals and health care providers.

In Region 10, the Washington State Hospital Association was chosen as a Hospital Engagement Network organization.



Region 10 States Receive Bonus Payments for Enrolling Eligible Children in Health Coverage.

On December 28, 2011, it was announced that 23 states will share over \$296 million in Federal performance bonuses for ensuring more children have health coverage.



The performance bonus payments are funded under the Children's Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act, one of the first pieces of legislation signed into law by President Obama in 2009. To qualify for these bonus payments, States must surpass a specified Medicaid enrollment target. They also must adopt procedures that improve access to Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), making it easier for eligible children to enroll and retain coverage.

All of the states in Region 10 received bonus payments, ranging from \$1,302,552 to \$22,493,771.

Region 10 Health Care Professionals Selected for the New Innovation Advisors Program.

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) recently announced that it has selected 73 individuals from 27 States and the District of Columbia for its Innovation Advisors program.

The initiative, launched by the CMS Innovation Center in October 2011, will help health professionals deepen skills that will drive improvements to patient care and reduce costs. After an initial orientation phase, Innovation Advisors will work with the CMS Innovation Center to test new models of care delivery in their own organizations and communities. They will also create partnerships to find new ideas that work and share them regionally and across the United States.

Funding for this initiative was made possible by the Affordable Care Act.

Congratulations to the three individuals in Region 10 that were selected to the program: Kellie Hamblin, Providence Health & Services, Renton, WA; Michelle Schoepflin Sanders, Providence Health & Services, Portland, OR; Christina Schwien, Qualis Health, Seattle, WA.

HHS Funding Opportunities

Educating Women about Programs, Benefits, and Rights under the Affordable Care Act Request for Proposals (RFP).

Funding is available to support activities and events that provide awareness and education to women living in the United States and its affiliated territories on the programs, benefits, and rights under the Affordable Care Act.

These activities can cover different areas of the Affordable Care Act such as preventive services, Medicare benefits, reducing health disparities, and the Pre-Existing Condition Insurance Plan. Proposals must be received no later than 5:00 p.m. Mountain Time (MT) on January 20, 2012. [More details](#).

For more resources, please visit the [HHS Grants/Funding site](#) or [FYI: Minority Resources...Money & More](#), a newsletter published by the Office of Minority Health Resource Center.

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Questions or comments? Please contact me at susan.johnson@hhs.gov or 206-615-2010.