

# HHS Office of Intergovernmental and External Affairs News Bulletin: Friday, July 19th, 2013

Visit [HHS.gov/Healthcare](http://HHS.gov/Healthcare) and [CuidadodeSalud.Gov](http://CuidadodeSalud.Gov), two consumer-focused health care websites to: [find insurance options](#), [compare care quality](#), and [learn about the law](#). How is the Affordable Care Act helping you? Share your story [here](#).

## Secretary's Corner

- **July 19, 2013**  
Secretary Sebelius announced \$12 million in Affordable Care Act funding to support primary care residency programs in 32 Teaching Health Centers across the nation. Funding will help train more than 300 residents during the 2013-2014 academic year, doubling the number of residents trained in the previous academic year. View full statement [here](#).
- **July 18, 2013**  
Secretary Sebelius released a new report that finds premiums in the Health Insurance Marketplace will be nearly 20 percent lower in 2014 than previously expected. The Affordable Care Act requires health insurers in every state to publicly justify any premium rate increases of 10 percent or more. Health insurance companies now generally have to spend at least 80 cents of every premium dollar on health care or improvements to care, or provide a rebate to their policy holders. In addition, when the Health Insurance Marketplace opens for enrollment on October 1, 2013 consumers will be able to make apples to apples comparisons of quality health insurance plans. View full report [here](#).
- **July 15, 2013**  
Secretary Sebelius wrote a blog post about how the Affordable Care Act is on track. "HHS is on task, working every day to create needed change for Americans." "Before health reform became law, too many American were left uncovered and unprotected. In less than 6 months, historic changes will go into effect to ensure that all Americans have access to affordable, quality health coverage." View full blog post [here](#).

## Affordable Care Act News

- **July 17, 2013**  
The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) introduced two free mobile device applications (apps) to help physicians and health care industry users to track their payments and other financial transfers the industry will report under the OPEN PAYMENTS program (Physician Payments Sunshine Act). Created by a provision of the Affordable Care Act, OPEN PAYMENTS creates greater public transparency about the financial transactions between doctors, teaching hospitals, drug and device manufacturers, and other health care businesses.
- **July 16, 2013**  
The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) announced positive and promising results from the first performance year of the Pioneer Accountable Care Organization (ACO) Model, including both higher quality care and lower Medicare expenditures. Made possible by the Affordable Care Act, the Pioneer ACO Model encourages providers and caregivers to deliver more coordinated care for Medicare beneficiaries. This model, launched by the CMS Innovation Center, is part of the Affordable Care Act's efforts to realign payment incentives, promoting high quality, efficient care for Medicare beneficiaries. View full release [here](#).

## White House Health Care Blog Posts

- **July 18, 2013**  
Megan Slack, Deputy Director of Digital Content for the Office of Digital Strategy at the White House, wrote a blog post about the Affordable Care Act's Medical Loss Ratio refunds. "Thanks to a provision in the Affordable Care Act, if your insurance company isn't spending at least 80 percent of your premium dollars on medical care, they have to send you some money back." View full blog post [here](#).

➤ **July 17, 2013**

Richard Kronick, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Health Policy, wrote a blog post about the how the Marketplace competition is at work. "The Affordable Care Act brings an unprecedented level of transparency and competition to the health insurance market by requiring insurance companies in every state to publicly justify rate increases of 10 percent or more. Experts evaluate large proposed increases to make sure they are based on reasonable cost assumptions and solid evidence, and insurance companies must publicly justify and post on their website any unreasonable rate increases." View full blog post [here](#).

## **Educational Materials**

*Below you'll find materials related to the implementation of the Affordable Care Act.*

### **Health Insurance Marketplace**

*For more information about the Health Insurance Marketplace including official resources, research, news, and events visit <http://marketplace.cms.gov/>*

### **Marketplace Updates**

*For information on how to sign up for coverage through the Health Insurance Marketplace, including text message and email updates visit <http://www.healthcare.gov/marketplace/index.html>*

### **State by State Fact Sheets**

*Choose your state to learn more about the immediate benefits of the Affordable Care Act, <http://www.healthcare.gov/law/information-for-you/index.html>*