

# **HHS Office of Intergovernmental and External Affairs News Bulletin: Friday, April 18<sup>th</sup>, 2014**

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**

### ➤ **April 4, 2014**

Secretary Sebelius authored a blog highlighting the fact that 7.1 million people have signed up for quality, affordable, private health insurance options in the Health Insurance Marketplace through March 31. And, according to a new CMS report released today, 3 million additional individuals enrolled in Medicaid or CHIP through the end of February 2014 compared to enrollment before the Health Insurance Marketplace opened on October 1, 2013. Enrollment in states that adopted the Medicaid coverage expansion increased five-fold compared to states that are not expanding Medicaid. We expect enrollment in March to be even higher, although individuals can continue to enroll in Medicaid all year round. Eligibility determinations also continued to grow: between October 2013 and February 2014, 11.7 million people were determined eligible for Medicaid and CHIP by State agencies, up from 8.9 million reported last month for the October – January period. You can read the rest of the Secretary's blog [here](#).

## **Affordable Care Act News**

### ➤ **April 17, 2014**

Everyone appreciates transparency, especially when it comes to evaluating inpatient psychiatric services for oneself or a loved one with mental illness. CMS mandated inpatient psychiatric facilities to publicly release important data on its Hospital Compare website, to provide potential clients with greater information to make an informed decision of which treatment facility earns their business. Read more about it [here](#).

### ➤ **April 16, 2014**

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) issued a guidance letter to states providing clarification regarding the coverage of family planning-related services provided to individuals eligible under the optional categorically needy state plan group created by section 2303 of the Affordable Care Act. The letter is available [here](#) and will provide you with more information.

### ➤ **April 15, 2014**

In 2013, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) announced the CMS Innovation Center will test a new Comprehensive End-Stage Renal Disease (ESRD) Care model. Through this new initiative, CMS will partner with groups of health care providers and suppliers – ESRD Seamless Care Organizations (ESCOs) – to test and evaluate a new model of payment and care delivery specific to Medicare beneficiaries with ESRD. The goals of the model are to improve beneficiary health outcomes and reduce per capita Medicare expenditures. After receiving stakeholder feedback on the model, on April 15, 2014, the CMS Innovation Center released a revised Request for Applications (RFA) for the Comprehensive ESRD Care model. You can view the revised RFA [here](#). Information about how to apply is available on the [Innovation Center website](#). You can read the FAQs [here](#). The ESRD Demo notice at the Federal Register is available [here](#).

### ➤ **April 9, 2014**

In another move to increase transparency and promote affordability within the healthcare system, HHS announced the release of new privacy-protected data on services provided to

Medicare beneficiaries by physicians and other health care professionals. To learn about how this might give your local town doctor a bad Monday, read about it [here](#).

➤ **April 7, 2014**

CMS released new guidance that will now provide beneficiaries access to a wider array of high quality, high value, and low-cost services; enhancing the overall experience, as well as the total cost. To read more about how this might affect you, a loved one, or the millions of Americans dependent on Medicare, read about the changes [here](#). The 2015 Rate Announcement and final Call Letter Fact sheet is available [here](#).

➤ **April 4, 2014**

For those individuals that were not able to get covered by April 15<sup>th</sup>, due to a special circumstance and think they be may eligible for the Special Enrollment Period, CMS released new guidance that provides more details on the SEP and who qualifies. The new fact sheet released by CMS is available through these links:

<http://marketplace.cms.gov/help-us/assisting-consumers-march-31.pdf>

<https://www.healthcare.gov/>

<https://www.healthcare.gov/how-can-i-get-coverage-outside-of-open-enrollment/#part=2>

<https://www.healthcare.gov/what-if-i-tried-to-enroll-by-march-31-but-didnt-finish-in-time/>

➤ **April 4, 2014**

**HHS released its Medicaid February Enrollment Report**

This report is the fifth in a series of monthly reports on state Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) data, and represents state Medicaid and CHIP agencies' eligibility activity for the calendar month of February 2014, which coincides with the fifth month of the initial open enrollment period for the Health Insurance Marketplace ("Marketplace" hereafter). This report includes state data and analysis regarding applications to Medicaid and CHIP agencies and the State Based Marketplaces (SBMs) and eligibility determinations made by the Medicaid and CHIP agencies. New for this month, this report also includes state data on total enrollment in the Medicaid and CHIP programs. The Medicaid Enrollment report is available [here](#) and the fact sheet is available [here](#)

➤ **April 3, 2014**

The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) announced that the Social Security Administration (SSA) is now able to process requests for Medicare Part A and Part B Special Enrollment Periods, and reductions in Part B and premium Part A late enrollment penalties for certain eligible people in same-sex marriages. This is another step HHS is taking in response to the June 26, 2013 Supreme Court ruling in *U.S. v. Windsor*, which held section 3 of the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) unconstitutional. Because of this ruling, Medicare is no longer prevented by DOMA from recognizing same-sex marriages for determining entitlement to, or eligibility, for Medicare.

While Medicare is managed by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), SSA is responsible for determining eligibility for, and enrolling people in, Medicare. Additional information is available [here](#).

➤ **April 3, 2014**

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) announced a new partnership with the State of Michigan to test an initiative to improve care for Medicare-Medicaid enrollees. Under the demonstration, Michigan and CMS will contract with health plans called Integrated Care Organizations (ICOs), which will provide an integrated set of Medicare and Medicaid benefits to enrolled beneficiaries in four regions of the state. Approximately 100,000 Medicare-Medicaid enrollees in Michigan will be eligible for the demonstration.

More information about the Care Bridge or the demonstration in general is available in a fact sheet [here](#). More information on the Financial Alignment Initiative is available [here](#).

➤ **April 2, 2014**

In letters to the American Medical Association and Florida Medical Association [http://downloads.cms.gov/files/Madara\\_Final\\_Signed.pdf](http://downloads.cms.gov/files/Madara_Final_Signed.pdf), the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) announced our intent today to take another major step forward in making our health care system more transparent and accountable. We plan to provide the public unprecedented access to information about the number and type of health care services that individual physicians and certain other health care professionals delivered in 2012, and the amount Medicare paid them for those services, beginning not earlier than April 9. Providing consumers with this information will help them make more informed choices about the care they receive.

## **Health Care Blog Posts**

### ➤ **April 17, 2014**

Open Enrollment is over, giving millions of Americans a piece of mind when it comes to knowing that they will be covered if a medical emergency arises. Yet, if you have just gotten around to realizing that getting covered is something you would like to do, there are still options for you, and your first step to finding out about them is reading the article [here](#).

### ➤ **April 15, 2014**

So you did it, you enrolled and are now one of the millions of Americans enrolled in Medicaid or the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), how are you to use this newfound coverage? You can find out how to use this great new resource by reading our convenient how-to article [here](#).

### ➤ **April 15, 2014**

Healthcare is unquestionably a fundamental service which all people are entitled to, regardless of ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, etc. HHS has been working on Enhancing Health Care Protections for LGBT Individuals and through their blog, LGBT Outreach Specialist Matt Heinz along with OCR Chief of Staff Juliet Choi, describe how the ACA is ensuring that LGBT individuals have equal access to health care and are free from discrimination. You can read their blog [here](#).

### ➤ **April 2, 2014**

Jonathan Blum, Principal Deputy Administrator, Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, authored a blog indicating the next steps that CMS would take to ensure Medicare data transparency. You can read his entire blog [here](#).

## **White House Health Care Blog Posts**

### ➤ **April 17, 2014**

8 Million Americans now have access to quality and affordable health care thanks to the implementation of the Affordable Care Act. President Obama made that announcement from the White House Briefing Room. You can about the announcement and get other facts about 8 million Americans that have health coverage [here](#).

### ➤ **April 11, 2014**

After serving the President for more than five years as the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services, Kathleen Sebelius announced her resignation. President Obama promptly accepted her resignation and turned to longtime Office of Management and Budget Director Sylvia Matthews-Burwell to the job. What issues are in store for soon-to-be Secretary Burwell, and where will Ms. Sebelius go next? You can find out by reading the story [here](#).

### ➤ **April 9, 2014**

Todd Park, Assistant to the President and U.S. Chief Technology Officer, authored a blog highlighting CMS's historic step in making data open and accessible to the public about the types and frequency of medical services that doctors and health care providers deliver to people 2with Medicare and about how much providers are paid. You can read his entire blog [here](#).

➤ **April 4, 2014**

While Open Enrollment for the general public has closed, except for those special circumstances where individuals may be able to qualify for a Special Enrollment Period, Medicaid enrollment continues. In her blog, Tara McGuinness, provides information on the positive impact Medicaid has had on increasing the number of people that are gaining coverage through Medicaid and CHIP, thanks to the Affordable Care Act. You can read Ms. McGuinness' blog [here](#).

➤ **April 1, 2014**

President Obama, with Vice President Biden at his side, announced that 7.1million Americans have signed up for private insurance coverage thanks to the Affordable Care Act. You will be able to read President Obama's announcement [here](#) and get more details about the 7.1 million Americans that have signed up through this blog available [here](#).

## **Educational Materials**

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

### **Info-Grpahics**

View all our *Flickr Info-Graphs* page [here](#).

How Obamacare Prices Shake Out: <http://m.huffpost.com/us/entry/3990491/>

## **Public Service Announcement/Address**

### **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>*