

## Health Care Reform News and Policy Update 04.02.2010

### LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Earlier in the week, President Obama signed the reconciliation package into law, completing a legislative process that began over a year ago. In the days since signature of the bill, discussion has turned to the timeline of implementation. Front and center are those provisions to be implemented this year, such as expanding dependent coverage until age 26 ([Kaiser Health News](#)), providing rebates to Medicare recipients in the coverage gap ([Kaiser Family Foundation](#)), and prohibiting pre-existing condition exclusions for children ([Associated Press](#)). Also check out articles below that provide context for the discussion about new responsibilities for the IRS, expanded funding for community health centers, the importance of consumer advocacy in dispelling misinformation, and the suits being filed on behalf of some Republican Attorneys General that question the constitutionality of the new law.

For those who missed last week's update, check out the Kaiser Family Foundation's excellent [summary of the new law](#) and a [timeline](#) for tracking the implementation process.

As we move into the implementation phase of health reform, there is much work to be done at the state and federal level, as well as in communities around the country. Care Ring will continue to monitor this process and provide targeted updates as health reform news breaks and as we learn more about the implementation process and how health care reform will impact our community. Please stay tuned!

### MUST READ NEWS

#### **Insurance Protection for Adult Children Won't Come Fast Enough For Some Parents**

[Kaiser Health News](#)

This article discusses the provision in the health care bill that will allow for dependent coverage up to age 26, beginning in September of this year, but focuses on the concerns among parents and young adults about when and how this provision will be implemented. Many questions remain about practical details regarding when and how families will become eligible.

#### **Debate Brews Over Expansion of Internal Revenue Service's Work Force**

[Politico](#)

Through the new legislation, the IRS will have additional responsibilities that include processing more than \$500 billion in subsidies and tax credits for millions of individual Americans, large employers and small businesses as well as assessing penalties on individuals - \$95 in 2014, up to \$695 in 2016 - who do not obtain coverage. While Republicans have voiced concerns about the role of IRS agents in enforcing the mandate, this article describes how the legislation's individual mandate enforcement provisions were watered down such that the IRS cannot use liens or seize assets, individuals will not face criminal penalties, civil penalties, or be charged interest on penalty payments.

#### **Health Care for All, With Obama Down the Street**

[New York Times](#)

Health care reform will provide an \$11 billion increase in funding to community health centers, intended to help ease the burden of the increase in Medicaid coverage and serve additional people. This article talks about the work of one community health center in Portland, Maine.

### **Swindlers Exploit Confusion Over Health Care Law**

[NPR News](#)

*NPR News* shows the important role of educating and advocating for consumers in the post-health reform passage world. *NPR* reports that we are already seeing a surge in swindlers taking advantage of the confusion around the implementation of the health reform law, as advertisements and salespeople are already offering bogus opportunities to take advantage of health coverage under the new law.

### **Health Care Lawsuit Squeezes Dems**

Politico

This article discusses the pressure that some Democratic Attorneys General, particularly those running for higher office, are facing as some of their Republican counterparts around the country are filing suit on the grounds that the health reform bill is unconstitutional. These complaints focus on the constitutionality of the individual mandate, financial burdens of expanding Medicaid and implementing state exchanges.

### **Insurance Industry Agrees to Fix Kids Coverage Gap**

[Associated Press](#)

The *Associated Press* reports on the quick resolution of uncertainties around the implementation on the ban on pre-existing conditions exclusions to be implemented this year for children with medical conditions. While the legislation could have been more narrowly interpreted to yield a less ironclad ban, the insurance companies were quick to accept these new regulations. As such, children with pre-existing medical conditions will not be able to be denied access to their parents' coverage under the new law.

### **Companies Push to Repeal Provision of Health Law**

[New York Times](#)

In the news this week were reports from several large corporations announcing taking substantial charges for the current quarter in response to a provision in the new law that reduces the tax deduction for companies with drug coverage for their retired employees. The *New York Times* reports that the American Benefits Council has requested a repeal of this provision, which was defended by the White House as a deliberate effort to eliminate a tax loophole.

### **Unraveling Health Care Reform Would Leave Millions with Less Affordable Care**

[Center for American Progress](#)

This report provides data on the residents in each state likely to experience coverage improvements under full implementation of health care reform. They note that the attorneys general filing constitutional challenges against reform are from states with disproportionate numbers of residents likely to receive help.

### **EXPLAINING HEALTH CARE REFORM:**

#### **Key Changes to the Medicare Part D Drug Benefit Coverage Gap**

[Kaiser Family Foundation](#)

This issue brief explains key changes to the Medicare Part D drug benefit that will reduce enrollee out-of-pocket liability in the coverage gap.