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# HHS Office of Intergovernmental and External Affairs

## News Bulletin: Friday, August 2nd, 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 31, 2013

Secretary Sebelius released a report detailing the Department of Health and Human Services' significant strides over the past year as well as its objectives for the coming year for improving the health and well-being of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) individuals, families, and communities. The Department's recent and future work encompasses a range of investments to help reduce health disparities and ensure equality and health security for LGBT Americans, from LGBT-inclusive research and data collection to equal access to affordable, quality health coverage. View full report [here](#).

#### \* July 30, 2013

Secretary Sebelius released a statement regarding the 48<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Medicare and Medicaid. "Today, we mark the 48th anniversary of Medicare and Medicaid becoming law, a sacred promise our country made to older Americans and low-income working Americans and families that they will have the medical care they need to live healthier lives. The historic pledge acknowledges that after contributing a lifetime of hard work to our nation's well-being, our seniors will be able to live their golden years with the security and peace of mind that comes with having affordable health coverage under Medicare. View full statement [here](#)."

#### \* July 30, 2013

Secretary Sebelius wrote a blog post about strengthening Medicare and Medicaid. "My 92-year-old father first ran for public office after he finished his military service in World War II. He served on the city council, and later was elected to Congress. In 1965, he helped write and voted for Medicare and Medicaid, which celebrate their 48<sup>th</sup> anniversary today. Since then, Medicare has been a guaranteed benefit earned after a lifetime of hard work for millions of America's seniors. Medicaid has provided affordable health coverage for millions of low-income working Americans and families. Both programs have helped keep people from falling into poverty. Both have been lifelines to better health and sources of peace of mind and security. View full blog post [here](#)."

### Affordable Care Act News

#### \* August 2, 2013

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) issued a final rule [CMS-1449-F] that would update fiscal year (FY) 2014 Medicare payment rates and the wage index for hospices serving Medicare beneficiaries. This hospice payment rule reflects the ongoing efforts of CMS to support beneficiary access to hospice. Hospices will see an estimated one percent (\$160 million) increase in their payments for fiscal year (FY) 2014. View full report [here](#).

#### \* August 2, 2013

Today, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) issued a final rule updating fiscal year (FY) 2014 Medicare payment policies and rates for inpatient stays at general acute care and long-term care hospitals (LTCHs). The rule improves value and quality in hospital care and provides clarification about when a patient should be admitted to the hospital and responds to recent concerns about extended Medicare beneficiary stays in the hospital outpatient department. View fact sheet [here](#) and final rule [here](#).

### \* **August 1, 2013**

The Obama Administration launched [Business.U.S.A.gov/healthcare](http://Business.U.S.A.gov/healthcare), a one-stop-shop Website which will provide employers of all sizes educational materials on how the Affordable Care Act may affect businesses and help them compete. The site includes a wizard tool that is tailored based on size and location, so businesses can learn how the law helps them provide affordable coverage options to their employees while still meeting their bottom line. The site will act as a user-friendly hub that connects employers to informational content on tax credits and other provisions of the law from the Small Business Administration, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), and the Treasury Department. View full statement [here](#).

### \* **July 30, 2013**

Department of Health and Human Services announced that more than 6.6 million people with Medicare have saved over \$7 billion on prescription drugs as a result of the Affordable Care Act, an average of \$1,061 per beneficiary. The Affordable Care Act closes the donut hole over time. View full statement [here](#).

### \* **July 29, 2013**

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) released the application to become a Certified Application Counselor (CAC) organization. CAC organizations will train their staff and volunteers to help people understand, apply, and enroll for health coverage through the Marketplace. View more information on Certified Application Counselor organizations [here](#), and view application [here](#).

## Health Care Blog Posts

### \* **August 1, 2013**

Karen Mills, Small Business Administration Administrator, wrote a blog post about the health care changes that will become a new tool for small business owners. Affordable health care is a top concern for America's 28 million small businesses. During my travels, I've had a number of small business owners across the country tell me that the moment they really felt their business was a success was the day they were able to offer health insurance to their employees. But we know that many small business owners may still be wondering when that day will be and what the Affordable Care Act can do to help. Depending on the size of your business, different provisions of the Affordable Care Act may apply. This is why it's so important that small business owners know the facts about the law and use them to make any business decisions. View full blog post [here](#).

## White House Health Care Blog Posts

### \* **July 31, 2013**

Carole Johnson from the White House wrote a blog post about nominating a White House Champion of Change for Public Health and Prevention. "Since its earliest days, the Obama Administration has worked to improve the health and well-being of our families and our communities. From tackling childhood obesity, to combating the tobacco epidemic, to expanding access to affordable health coverage, the Administration has focused on innovative and meaningful ways to support a healthier America. The Administration believes that prevention and public health are a top priority because they have lasting effects on the health of Americans. That's why the Affordable Care Act provides unprecedented resources through the Prevention and Public Health Fund to support community-based strategies to prevent chronic diseases, such as heart disease, diabetes and cancer, and support public health. Communities across the country are working with their public health leaders, employers, schools and citizens and across sectors like health, transportation, housing and education, to build partnerships that promote healthy lifestyles." 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>*