HHS Office of Intergovernmental and External Affairs News Bulletin: Friday, July 18, 2014

Visit *HHS.gov/Healthcare* and *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*.

ACA News

❋ **July 18, 2014**
The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) today awarded additional contracts as part of a restructuring the Quality Improvement Organization (QIO) Program to create a new approach to improve care for beneficiaries, families and caregivers. QIOs are private, mostly not-for-profit organizations staffed by doctors and other health care professionals trained to review medical care and help beneficiaries with complaints about the quality of care and to implement improvements in the quality of care available throughout the spectrum of care.

The new contracts being awarded to fourteen organizations represent the second phase of QIO restructuring. The awardees will work with providers and communities across the country on data-driven quality initiatives. These QIOs will be known as Quality Innovation Network (QIN)-QIOs.

QIN-QIO projects will be based in communities, health care facilities and clinical practices. They will drive quality by providing technical assistance, convening learning and action networks for sharing best practices, collecting and analyzing data for improvement. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) National Quality Strategy (NQS) and the CMS Quality Strategy provide the framework for the contracts along with the companion, recommendations, and priorities.

You can read the press release here.

❋ **July 18, 2014**
The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) issued revised guidance on Part D payment for drugs for beneficiaries enrolled in hospice. CMS is modifying the March 10 guidance to Part D sponsors to place a prior authorization for all drugs for hospice beneficiaries. In the revised guidance issued today, CMS instructs Part D sponsors to use prior authorization only on the four categories of drugs that the Inspector General, in consultation with hospice providers, identified as typically used to treat the common symptoms of pain, nausea, constipation and anxiety that hospice beneficiaries generally experience during the end of life, regardless of terminal diagnosis. The categories of drugs for which hospice-related prior authorization remains appropriate are analgesics, antinauseants, laxatives, and antianxiety drugs. Part D sponsors are no longer expected to place hospice-related prior authorization requirements on other categories of drugs.

CMS expects the number of Part D claims for hospice beneficiaries for drugs in these four categories to be very few. Together with other steps taken to facilitate the prior authorization process, these limits on hospice-related prior authorization under Part D will minimize any barriers to hospice beneficiary access to prescription drugs at the end of life.

The revised guidance is attached.

❋ **July 17, 2014**
CMS sent letters to the U.S. territories clarifying that, given their unique situation and further interpretation of the definition of "state," certain provisions of the Affordable Care Act no longer apply.

Virgin Islands: http://www.cms.gov/CCIIO/Resources/Letters/Downloads/letter-to-Francis.pdf

Northern Mariana Islands: http://www.cms.gov/CCIIO/Resources/Letters/Downloads/letter-to-Igisomar.pdf
Guam: http://www.cms.gov/CCIIO/Resources/Letters/Downloads/letter-to-Ilagan.pdf
American Samoa: http://www.cms.gov/CCIIO/Resources/Letters/Downloads/letter-to-Tanuvasa.pdf
Puerto Rico: http://www.cms.gov/CCIIO/Resources/Letters/Downloads/letter-to-Weyne.pdf

❋ **July 15, 2014**
HHS Secretary Sylvia M. Burwell announced the availability of $11 million, through the Affordable Care Act and the Secretary's Minority AIDS Initiative Fund, to support the integration of high-quality HIV services into primary care through innovative partnerships between health centers and state health departments in Florida, Massachusetts, Maryland and New York. This initiative supports the goals of the Administration's National HIV/AIDS Strategy.

This funding opportunity is part of a new three-year, multi-agency project-- Partnerships for Care: Health Departments and Health Centers Collaborating to Improve HIV Health Outcomes. Run jointly by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), this project will enable HRSA-funded health centers to work with CDC-funded state health departments to expand the provision of HIV prevention, testing, care, and treatment services, especially among racial/ethnic minorities.

More information on this funding opportunity announcement is available here.
Read about HHS2 Federal HIV/AIDS initiatives here.
You can learn more about the Affordable Care Act and Community Health Centers here.
Information about HRSA's Community Health Center Program is available here.

The press release is available here

❋ **July 14, 2014**

Health and Human Services Secretary Sylvia M. Burwell announced a new innovative collaboration with states to improve care for Medicaid beneficiaries by accelerating efforts in reforming their health care systems to improve health and care while reducing costs. The goals and activities of the Medicaid Innovation Accelerator Program build on many of the recent recommendations made by the National Governors Association's (NGA) Health Care Sustainability Task Force.

This initiative is consistent with states' recommendation that the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) identify opportunities for care improvement and addressing high priority areas such as mental health and emergency department utilization. Through the Medicaid Innovation Accelerator Program, HHS is investing over $100 million in technical support to help states in their efforts to improve health, improve care and decrease costs for their Medicaid beneficiaries. While complementing other federal-state delivery system reform efforts such as the State Innovation Models initiative, this new initiative will help jumpstart innovation by providing federal tools and resources to support states in advancing Medicaid-specific delivery system reform.

Additional information on the Medicaid Innovation Accelerator Program is available here

The press release is available here

Additional resources are available here

The new Medicaid Moving Forward report is available here

HHS News
❋ **July 18, 2014**
The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) issued the Comprehensive Medicaid Integrity Plan. As mandated by the Deficit Reduction Act, the Comprehensive Medicaid Integrity Plan sets forth the strategy to safeguard the integrity of the Medicaid program during federal fiscal years 2014–2018. The execution of this Plan will improve the ability of state Medicaid agencies and CMS to leverage program data to detect and prevent improper payments, which will strengthen the ability of state Medicaid agencies to safeguard state and federal Medicaid dollars from diversion into fraud, waste, and abuse. These efforts will expand the capacity of CMS to protect the integrity of the Medicaid program and to manage risk in the administration of federal grants to states.

You can access the Comprehensive Medicaid Integrity Plan FY 2014-2018 here.

Special enrollment period:

SEP: Baby or Adoption

Suggested Content
- Growing family? You're due to #GetCovered! Explore your health care options here: http://1.usa.gov/1umMaWN
- Having a baby? Your growing family may have new options for coverage: http://1.usa.gov/1qGzMCu #GetCovered
- Having a baby or adopting a child qualifies you for a Special Enrollment Period: http://go.usa.gov/9cSY
- Baby on the way? You're #DueToGetCovered! Learn more about your health care options: http://1.usa.gov/1umMaWN.
- Make sure every toe is covered - #BabyOnTheWay means you have new health care options available to you!
- Your growing family may have new options for coverage: http://1.usa.gov/1qGzMCu #GetCovered
- Your new family may have new options for coverage. http://1.usa.gov/1qGzMCu #GetCovered
- Have a new addition to the family? Learn more about getting coverage outside of open enrollment: http://go.usa.gov/9cSY #GetCovered

Images
- new-family-new-coverage-1.jpg
- new-family-new-coverage.jpg
- Baby1.jpg
- Baby2.jpg

SEP: 26th Birthday

Suggested Content
- Turning 26 and looking for health coverage? #GetCovered at @HealthCareGov. http://1.usa.gov/1umMaWN #BornIn88
- No longer covered by your parents' plan? #GetCovered at @HealthCareGov when you turn 26. http://1.usa.gov/1umMaWN #BornIn88
- Turning 26 means you have new options for health coverage: http://1.usa.gov/1umMaWN #GetCovered #BornIn88

Images
- 26th-birthday-get-covered.jpg
- 26th-birthday-get-covered-1.jpg
- 26th-birthday-get-covered-2.jpg

SEP: New Address

Suggested Content
- Unpack, then #GetCovered. A new address means new coverage options: http://1.usa.gov/1umMaWN
- Open the door to your new home, and new health care options: http://1.usa.gov/1umMaWN #GetCovered
- New home = new coverage. http://1.usa.gov/1umMaWN #GetCovered

Images
- new-address-new-coverage.jpg
- new-address-new-coverage-1.jpg

SEP: Marriage

Suggested Content
- Got married? Congratulations! You're in the driver's seat to #GetCovered: http://1.usa.gov/1umMaWN
- Tying the knot? It's time to #GetCovered! http://1.usa.gov/1umMaWN #GetCovered
- Getting married means you have new options for health care: http://1.usa.gov/1umMaWN. #GetCovered
- It's time to say "I Do" to health insurance. Take the next big step and #GetCovered: http://1.usa.gov/1umMaWN
- If you're saying "I do" you have new options for health care: http://1.usa.gov/1umMaWN. #LoveIsLove

Images
- got-married-get-covered.jpg
- Marriage1.jpg
- Marriage2.jpg

SEP: Medicaid & CHIP

Suggested Content
- Kids can #Enroll365 in #Medicaid and #CHIP! Explore your options and #GetCovered: http://1.usa.gov/1umMaWN
- Kids can be enrolled in #Medicaid and #CHIP all year long! http://1.usa.gov/1umMaWN #Enroll365

Images
- enroll-365.jpg
- enroll-365-1.jpg

Health Care Blog Posts

❉ July 15, 2014

Meet Robert Mandler Jr. – a 47-year-old from the Florida Gulf Coast who got covered just in time. And to think, he was not always in favor of the Affordable Care Act. "I would not have had access to any of this if not for the health care law…I must be one of the luckiest people in the world. I'm going to live and work and be productive." Read Robert's story at ***I'm Covered Stories: A Just-in-Time Convert to Health Insurance*** to learn how getting coverage and financial assistance through the Health insurance marketplace helped him overcome a life-changing condition.

White House Health Care Blog Posts
None

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

Info-Grapahics
*View our entire **Flickr Info-Graphs** page* here.

Public Service Announcement/Address

Twitter/Facebook

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. The ACA state by state fact sheets have been updated with the most current stats available.
They can be found here: http://www.hhs.gov/healthcare/facts/bystate/statebystate.html