

This Week in Health Care Reform: April 30, 2010

As lawmakers in Washington focused on financial reform and climate change issues, President Obama travelled to the Midwest this week to speak with small-business owners, farmers, and local leaders about the benefits of his new health care reform law, jobs, and the economy.

As the health care reform debate continues to take shape this year, we encourage you and others to engage Members of Congress by visiting the [Health Action Network](#).

Health Care Reform

WellPoint to Apply Some Provisions of Health Law Early: [WellPoint](#) representatives announced that starting Saturday WellPoint's affiliated health plans will implement a provision in the new health care reform law that prevents insurers from rescinding policies, except in [cases](#) of fraud or intentional misrepresentation of material fact. The new health care reform law requires insurers to change this policy by September of this year.

Federal Health Insurance Plan Won't Cover Young Adults: While WellPoint's affiliated health plans and other insurers announced this month their intention to extend medical coverage for qualifying graduating students in advance of the September 23rd effective date, officials at the [Federal Employee Health Benefits Program](#), the nation's largest employer, announced this week that they are unable to meet the new law's requirement until January of next [year](#). As a proactive measure to assist its members, [WellPoint's](#) affiliated health plans will allow qualifying young adults to remain on their parents' policies beginning on June 1.

Additional Activities

First Deadline for Health Law Provision Looming: [According](#) to the new health care reform law, state government officials have until Friday to decide whether to help the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) set up or expand high-risk insurance pools, which go into effect by the June 21. The new law gives the federal government \$5 billion to finance these [pools](#). These pools are designed to quickly provide [coverage](#) to individuals who have been without insurance coverage for six months and cannot get coverage due to pre-existing conditions. However, state leaders fear that federal funding will be insufficient to last until 2014, when the pools are phased out, leaving state budgets to cover the [difference](#).

Republicans Demand a Hearing to Examine Health Care Costs: On [Wednesday](#), House Republicans demanded an investigation into whether the health care overhaul plan would increase national health spending. Their concerns were based on a [report](#), released last week by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), which projected national health care spending to [increase](#) by 1 percent over the next 10 years. These findings contradict Democrats' assertion that the new health care law would control

costs. The CMS [report](#) also indicates that the [\\$5 billion](#) set aside for implementation of the new high-risk pools will be exhausted within the next two years, leaving those states that sign up for the program the financial burden after federal funding dries up.

Public Opinion

Americans Confused about Health Care Reform Legislation: According to a new [Kaiser Family Foundation poll](#), 55 percent of [Americans](#) are confused about the new health care reform law, while [56 percent](#) say they don't have enough information to know how the bill will affect them.

Physicians Overwhelmingly Oppose Health Care Reform Law: In a recent [poll](#) conducted by AthenaHealth and Sermo, 79 percent of physicians are less optimistic about medicine since the passage of health care reform. Further, 53 percent of doctors report they will consider opting out of insurance plans, while 66 percent indicate they will consider opting out of government-run programs altogether with the new law's implementation.

Looking Ahead

With Senate Republicans reaching an agreement this week with Democrats to begin debate on a financial reform bill, Administration officials are addressing the first deadline in the health care reform law and moving towards implementation.