



Kansas Insurance Department

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PPACA programs for public health and wellness

The national Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA) contains many new programs and requirements designed to improve the overall health and wellness of Americans. These programs are detailed below.

National Prevention, Promotion and Public Health Council — The president will establish a new council that is charged with developing strategies for the most effective and achievable means of improving the health status of Americans and reducing the incidence of preventable illness and disability.

By March 2011, the council must provide recommendations to the president and Congress regarding the most pressing health issues confronting the United States. The council must also recommend changes in U.S. policy to achieve national wellness and health goals.

This new council will report annually to the president and Congress regarding its activities and progress on the development of a list of national priorities to address lifestyle changes related to the following: smoking cessation, proper nutrition, appropriate exercise, mental health, behavioral health, substance use disorder, and the five leading disease killers in the U.S.

Prevention and Public Health Fund — The law provides for the creation and administration of a fund by the federal Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to provide for expanded and sustained national investment in prevention and public health programs to improve health and restrain the rate of growth in private and public sector health care costs.

Funding for the 2010 fiscal year is \$500 million, and the amount increases every year, up to \$2 billion/year by 2015. The funds are to be used for programs for prevention, wellness and public health activities, including prevention research and health screenings.

Education and Outreach Campaign — HHS is charged with planning and implementation of a national public-private partnership for prevention and health promotion outreach and education in order to raise public awareness of health improvement across the life span.

By March 2011 HHS will establish a national science-based media campaign on health promotion and disease prevention. This will be designed to address proper nutrition, regular exercise, smoking cessation, obesity reduction, the five leading disease killers in the U.S., and secondary prevention through disease screening promotion.

The campaign will use television, radio, and the Internet to target specific age groups based on peer-reviewed social research. HHS will also maintain a website to provide health care providers and consumers with science-based information on guidelines for nutrition, regular exercise, obesity reduction, smoking cessation and specific chronic disease prevention.

Community Transformation Grants — HHS will be awarding competitive grants to state and local government agencies and community-based organizations for the implementation, evaluation and dissemination of community preventive health activities. These activities are designed to reduce chronic disease rates, prevent the development of secondary conditions, address health disparities, and develop a stronger evidence-based prevention program.

The entities eligible for these grants are state and local governmental agencies, a national network of community-based organizations, and state or local non-profit organizations. Those who receive the grants must submit detailed plans that include how the plans will promote healthy living and reduce disparities.

These plans may include activities such as creating healthier school environments by increasing healthy food options, physical activity opportunities, healthy lifestyle promotion, emotional wellness and prevention curricula, and chronic disease prevention.

The plans may also include the development and promotion of programs targeting a variety of age levels to increase or enhance the following:

- access to nutrition, physical activity, and smoking cessation
- social and emotional wellness
- safety in a community
- chronic disease priority
- worksite wellness programming and incentive
- special population needs, including all age groups and individuals with disabilities and individuals in both urban and rural areas

The entities receiving grants must be able to measure changes in the residents of their communities in the areas of changes in weight, proper nutrition, physical activity, tobacco use, emotional well being and overall mental health.

Healthy Aging, Living Well Grants — HHS will also be awarding grants to state or local health departments to carry out a five-year pilot program to provide public health community interventions, screenings, and clinical referrals for persons ages 55-64. Intervention activities may include efforts to improve nutrition, increase physical activity, reduce tobacco use and substance abuse, improve mental health, and promote healthy lifestyles among this age group.

No Cost Sharing for Preventive Health Services — This change in health insurance plans goes into effect for plan years on or after September 23, 2010, and eliminates cost sharing for immunizations, services and screenings recommended by the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force and care and screenings recommended by HRSA (Health Resources and Services Administration) for children and women.

More information about the specific services and screenings subject to this requirement may be found at <http://www.ahrq.gov/clinic/pocketgd09/gcp09s1.htm> and at http://brightfutures.aap.org/3rd_Edition_Guidelines_and_Pocket_Guide.html.

Health Outcomes Reporting — By March 2012 HHS is required to develop annual reporting requirements for group health plans and health insurance issuers offering individual and group health insurance. Health plans and insurance issuers will be required to report on how health outcomes are improved through the use of quality reporting, effective case management, care coordination, chronic disease management, medication and care compliance initiatives, use of a medical home model, activities to prevent hospital readmissions, activities to improve patient safety and reduce medical errors through the use of best clinical practices, and implementation of wellness and health promotion activities.

The term "wellness and health promotion activities" may include smoking cessation, weight management, stress management, physical fitness, nutrition, heart disease prevention, healthy lifestyle, and diabetes prevention.

The Kansas Insurance Department will continue to monitor similar information coming from federal officials over the coming months. Look to this section for any updates.

The Kansas Insurance Department, established in 1871, assists and educates consumers, regulates and reviews companies and licenses agents selling insurance products in the state. More about the department is online at www.ksinsurance.org.