



Medical Professionals Support Health Reform

The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act

On Tuesday, March 23, 2010, the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act was signed into law by President Obama. According to an analysis by the Congressional Budget Office (CBO), more than 1 million uninsured Americans will gain coverage in the first year, 19 million will gain coverage by 2012, and 32 million by 2019. This includes 495,000 Missourians who will gain coverage by 2019.

Here's why medical professionals support health reform:

Medical professionals will be able provide the care their patients need because insurers will no longer be allowed to deny patients based on pre-existing conditions or drop them when they get sick.

Doctors, nurses and other health care workers will be able provide patients with continuous care as needed because there will no longer be lifetime caps on coverage.

Medical professionals will be able to keep young adults healthy because they will be permitted to remain on their parents' policies until age 26.

Tax credits for small businesses and new health insurance exchanges will help doctors afford health insurance for their own employees. The vast majority of physician practices are employers with 50 employees or less. (*Source: American Medical Association*)

Doctors and nurses will be able to treat low-income individuals and families before they get to the emergency room, due to subsidies to help low-income individuals and families purchase health coverage.

Insurance claims processing will be standardized and streamlined, helping to lower physician overhead costs and improve practice revenue cycles.

Medical professionals will have greater confidence that their senior patients will take their medications because the Medicare Part D Coverage Gap (donut hole) that haunts millions of seniors annually will be closed.

The new law promotes clinical comparative effectiveness research, which will help doctors to know what care is most effective *but cannot* be used to dictate treatment decisions or coverage.

Prevention and wellness initiatives, which have long been a priority for medical professionals, will be promoted.

Funding is provided to test medical liability reforms, such as health courts and disclosure laws, which could help bring down the cost of liability insurance for doctors.

Primary care payment rates for Medicaid will be increased so that they are the same as Medicare rates.

Increased funding for the training of primary care physicians, nurses, and public health professionals will relieve pressure on medical professionals in areas where there is a shortage of primary care providers.