



# AMERICA'S AFFORDABLE HEALTH CHOICES ACT

## QUALITY AFFORDABLE HEALTH CARE

### HEALTH REFORM AT A GLANCE: MAINTAINING AND IMPROVING MEDICAID

Medicaid covers health and long-term care services for over 60 million low-income Americans. States have over 40 years of experience operating the program with federal matching funds. America's Affordable Health Choices Act builds upon this existing state-based administrative structure to extend coverage to uninsured Americans who have incomes near or below poverty. It will also improve Medicaid payments to primary care practitioners to address concerns about access to needed services by Medicaid beneficiaries. These services will include preventive services appropriate to low-income children and adults for which there is evidence of effectiveness.

The Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) covers over 6 million low-income children who are not eligible for Medicaid. CHIP expires in 2013, the year that the new Health Insurance Exchange would begin operation. The bill ensures that children covered by CHIP at that time could enroll in a plan of their family's choice in the Exchange with no reduction in coverage and with financial assistance to make their new coverage affordable.

#### MEDICAID:

##### COVERING LOW-INCOME UNINSURED AMERICANS

- Effective 2013, individuals under age 65, with family incomes at or below 133% of poverty (\$14,400 for an individual in 2009) would be eligible for Medicaid. The cost of care for those newly enrolled in Medicaid as a result of this policy would be paid by the federal government, with no state contribution for the first two years; thereafter, a 10% state contribution.
- Those individuals with incomes at or below 133% of poverty who lose health insurance coverage within the previous 6 months (e.g., a young college graduate whose coverage under her parents' policy ends or a temporarily employed individual) would have the choice of enrolling in Medicaid or enrolling in the Health Insurance Exchange with assistance for their premiums.
- State Medicaid programs would continue to cover those with incomes above 133% of poverty using the eligibility rules that states now have in place.

##### IMPROVING ACCESS TO SERVICES

- Medicaid payments to primary care physicians and practitioners for primary care services are increased to 100% of Medicare rates in 2012 and thereafter. The costs of raising these rates would be paid entirely by the federal government through 2015; thereafter, states would contribute 10%.