



Thanks for the new day for America's children

It is a new day for America's children and youth. Health reform has become law, and the United States is in the company of other developed nations who afford all their citizens the right to health care.

With the adoption of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) in March, the U.S. made an important step to turn our broken health care system around with the significant reforms that will improve our nation's health care system and benefit Michigan's children and families.

The law covers nearly 32 million Americans including health care coverage for children. In Michigan, most of the newly eligible residents will be parents and childless adults. Expanding coverage will result in a reduction of uncompensated care provided by physicians and hospitals. Young people up to age 26 will remain on their parents' health insurance, and children will no longer be denied services because of a pre-existing health condition.

The law will provide age-appropriate benefits that meet the needs of children in a medical home. The medical home model of care provides high quality, comprehensive health care services through a partnership between the patient, the physician, and parents. Child health advocates applaud the new funding in Medicaid for states to pilot medical home initiatives. The Bright Futures Guidelines - the American Academy of Pediatrics definitive standard of pediatric well-child and preventive care—will be covered for children as an immediate benefit with no co-pay, no matter what type of insurance they have.

The ACA greatly improves children's access to health care. It includes a federal commitment to bring Medicaid payment in line with Medicare. In Michigan, doctors who see Medicaid patients are only paid 61% of what Medicare doctors are paid to administer the same primary care services. This reform is an enormous step forward to increase access to health care for Michigan's most vulnerable children.

Governors have raised concerns about new financial burdens that will be imposed on states with the Medicaid expansion included in ACA. But a new Urban Institute study finds that the vast majority of the costs will be borne by the federal government, enabling states to save money as a result. According to the study, the federal government will pay an average of 95.4 percent of the \$465 billion it will cost to expand Medicaid between 2014 and 2019.

Health reform is good for the country and good for Michigan. The leadership of the Michigan Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics is grateful for the health reform investment in the health and future of children. We look forward to working with our U.S. legislators and the child health community in Michigan to continue to make our children's health our highest national priority.

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