



AMERICAN ACADEMY OF
FAMILY PHYSICIANS
STRONG MEDICINE FOR AMERICA

2010 Health Care Reform and the AAFP

The American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP) believes that the *Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act* (H.R. 3590) is a good step forward in improving health care in this country.

Our support of this legislation is consistent not only with family medicine's long-held priorities, but with advocacy principles adopted by the AAFP Congress of Delegates in October 2009.

http://www.aafp.org/online/etc/medialib/aafp_org/documents/about/congress/2009/brdrpto.Par.0001.File.tmp/BoardReportO2009-1-revisedNov09.pdf

Specifically, the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act will guarantee coverage and expand access to health care for 32 million more Americans. It will help shift us toward a health care delivery system based on primary care. It will advance the principles of the patient-centered medical home. It will eliminate many of the worst practices of the health insurance industry, like dropping patients when they get sick and denying coverage because of pre-existing conditions.

The legislation contains helpful provisions for primary care physicians, including:

- a 10 percent bonus payment for primary care services for five years, beginning in 2011;
- a two-year experiment that will guarantee Medicaid pays primary care physicians at least as much as Medicare does for primary care services, including immunization;
- promotion of medical practice models that could enhance payment for primary care;
- advancement of the patient-centered medical home;
- increased funding for the National Health Service Corps and the nation's community health centers; and
- investment in the primary care physician workforce through reauthorization of Section 747 of Title VII of the Public Health Service Act, the only federal program that provides funds to academic departments of family medicine and family medicine residency programs to increase training of family physicians.

And, the legislation provides helpful provisions for our patients, such as:

- it bars health insurance companies from denying coverage to individuals with pre-existing conditions – the ban takes effect for children six months after enactment, and for all others starting in 2014;
- within six months after enactment, it will prohibit health insurance companies from dropping people from coverage when they get sick;
- it bans health insurance companies, within six months after enactment, from placing lifetime caps on coverage;
- it eliminates cost sharing on recommended preventive services delivered by Medicare and all insurance plans available in the Health Insurance Exchange;
- it begins to close the Medicare Part D coverage gap for Medicare beneficiaries who have surpassed their prescription drug coverage limit;
- it establishes 50 state-administered insurance marketplaces to allow small businesses and people without employer sponsored coverage to buy insurance that meets new federal standards; and
- it expands Medicaid to cover everyone earning less than 133 percent of the federal poverty level, or \$29,327 for a family of four.

Certainly, the AAFP would have liked to see this bill address medical malpractice reform more comprehensively and provide a permanent solution for Medicare payments to doctors. We will continue to work with the rest of the medical community and Congress for improvements in these areas and others that affect family physicians. That said, the AAFP believes the *Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act* is a good step forward in improving health care in this country.

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