



Pennsylvania
U.S. Senator Bob Casey



HEALTH CARE REFORM: IMMEDIATE BENEFITS FOR PENNSYLVANIA

The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act will provide immediate relief to families and businesses in Pennsylvania. This section outlines the benefits that go into effect on or before January 1, 2011.

Consumer Protections

Ends Rescissions: Bans health plans from dropping people from coverage after they get sick. *Effective September 23, 2010.*

No Discrimination Against Children With Preexisting Conditions: Prohibits health plans from denying coverage to the approximately 2.8 million Pennsylvania children with pre-existing conditions.ⁱ *Effective September 23, 2010.* (Beginning in 2014, this prohibition would apply to all persons.)

Immediate Help for the Uninsured until Exchange is Available (Interim High-Risk Pool): Provides immediate access to insurance for Americans who are uninsured because of a pre-existing condition - through a temporary high-risk pool. Ensures immediate access to affordable insurance options for as many as **143,451** uninsured Pennsylvanians who have a pre-existing condition.ⁱⁱ *Effective 90 days after enactment.*

Extends Coverage for Young People Up to Age 26 Through Parents' Insurance: Requires health plans to allow young people up to their 26th birthday to remain on their parents' insurance policy, at the parents' choice.ⁱⁱⁱ *Effective September 23, 2010.*

Bans Lifetime Limits on Coverage: Prohibits health plans from placing lifetime caps on coverage payments. *Effective September 23, 2010.*

Bans Restrictive Annual Limits on Coverage: Tightly restricts new plans' use of annual limits to ensure access to needed care. These tight restrictions will be defined by HHS. *Effective September 23, 2010.* (Beginning in 2014, the use of any annual limits would be prohibited for all plans.)

Prohibiting Discrimination Based on Salary: Prohibits new group health plans from establishing any eligibility rules for health care coverage that have the effect of discriminating in favor of higher wage employees. *Effective September 23, 2010.*

Free Preventive Care Under New Plans: Requires new private plans to cover preventive services with no co-payments and with preventive services being exempt from deductibles. *Effective September 23, 2010.* (Beginning in 2018, this requirement applies to all plans.)

Health Insurance Consumer Information: Provides aid to states in establishing offices of health insurance consumer assistance in order to help individuals with the filing of complaints and appeals. *Effective October 1, 2010.*

New, Independent Appeals Process: Ensures consumers in new plans have access to an effective internal and external appeals process to appeal decisions by their health insurance plan. *Effective September 23, 2010.*

Ensuring Value for Premium Payments: Requires plans in the individual and small group market to spend 80 percent of premium dollars on medical services, and plans in the large group market to spend 85 percent on medical services. Insurers that do not meet these thresholds must provide rebates to policyholders. *Effective January 1, 2011.*

Help for Small Businesses

Small Business Tax Credits: Offers tax credits to up to 151,000 Pennsylvania small businesses to make employee coverage more affordable.^{iv} Tax credits of up to 35 percent of premiums will be immediately available to firms that choose to offer coverage. *Effective beginning for calendar year 2010.* (Beginning in 2014, the small business tax credits will cover 50 percent of premiums.)

Better Care for Older Americans

Help for Early Retirees: Creates a temporary re-insurance program (until the Exchanges are available) to help offset the costs of expensive health claims for employers that provide health benefits for retirees age 55-64. *Effective 90 days after enactment*

Begins to close the Medicare Part D Donut Hole: Provides a \$250 rebate to Medicare beneficiaries who hit the donut hole in 2010. This would help about 2.2 million older citizens in Pennsylvania. *Effective for calendar year 2010.* (Beginning in 2011, institutes a 50% discount on brand-name drugs in the donut hole; also completely closes the donut hole by 2020.)

Free Preventive Care under Medicare: Eliminates co-payments for preventive services and exempts preventive services from deductibles under the Medicare program. *Effective January 1, 2011.*

Increasing Access to Care

Community Health Centers: Increases funding for Community Health Centers to allow for nearly a doubling of the number of patients seen by the centers over the next 5 years. *Effective October 1, 2010.*

Increasing Number of Primary Care Doctors: Provides new investment in training programs to increase the number of primary care doctors, nurses, and public health professionals. *Effective October 1, 2010.*

Creates New, Voluntary, Public Long-Term Care Insurance Program: Creates a long-term care insurance program to be financed by voluntary payroll deductions to provide benefits to adults who become functionally disabled. *Effective January 1, 2011.*

ⁱ U.S. Census Bureau, 1/7/10

ⁱⁱ Staff estimate using Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ), 4/09 and HealthReform.gov, accessed 3/20/10

ⁱⁱⁱ U.S. Census Bureau, 1/7/10

^{iv} HealthReform.gov, accessed 3/20/10