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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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***New consumer assistance grants will give states more resources to help consumers get and keep health coverage***

**Affordable Care Act grants have saved consumers millions**

Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary Kathleen Sebelius today announced a new round of funding to support state-based Consumer Assistance Programs that help consumers who have questions or concerns regarding their health insurance. An HHS report released today also shows that hundreds of thousands of consumers have been helped by state consumer assistance programs funded by the Affordable Care Act – the health care law.

“The health care law is putting consumers, not insurance companies, in control of their health care,” said Secretary Sebelius. “Consumer assistance programs provide a valuable tool for consumers who have questions or concerns about their health insurance.”

Consumer Assistance Program (CAP) grantees, which can be state agencies or local non-profits contracted by a state, provide a wide variety of services for consumers. They can help consumers find health coverage and file appeals against health plans. For individuals unsure about their rights, Consumer Assistance Programs can educate them to take action. To provide better assistance with future requests, Consumer Assistance Programs are required to track consumer complaints to help identify problems and develop solutions.

In October of 2010, CAP grants were awarded to 35 states, the District of Columbia, and four territories. The report released today shows that from October of 2010 to October of 2011:

- CAP grantees directly assisted more than 200,000 consumers and reached hundreds of thousands more through outreach and education efforts.
- CAP grantees recovered more than \$18 million in direct savings for consumers and millions of

dollars more in unquantifiable savings from better coverage

- More than 75 percent of all cases closed by CAPs were resolved in the consumer's favor.

The new funding opportunity announced today ensures that CAP grantees, whether operating in state agencies or as local non-profits, can continue to strengthen and enhance ongoing efforts in the states and local communities to protect consumers.

The grants will build on other programs and initiatives under the Affordable Care Act to help consumers make decisions about their care, including [www.HealthCare.gov](http://www.HealthCare.gov), where consumers can find health insurance options customized to their needs and location as well as other information about their benefits and rights under the Affordable Care Act.

For more information on CAP Grants, including a map that shows what support is available in your state, visit:

<http://www.healthcare.gov/law/features/rights/consumer-assistance-program/>

For the report on CAP grantee progress, visit: <http://cciio.cms.gov/resources/other/index.html#capg>

For the new Funding Opportunity Announcement, visit: <http://www.grants.gov> , and search for CFDA number 93.519.

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