

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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New Affordable Care Act grants to help put patients in control of their health care

*Nearly \$30 million in grants will fund state consumer assistance programs to help
consumers see benefits of Patient' s Bill of Rights*

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) today announced new Consumer Assistance Grants program awards of nearly \$30 million to help states and territories put patients in charge of their health care. These grants will support states' efforts to establish or strengthen consumer assistance programs that provide direct services to consumers with questions or concerns regarding their health insurance.

“ The Affordable Care Act' s Patient' s Bill of Rights gives people important benefits and ends the worst insurance company abuses,” said Secretary Kathleen Sebelius. “ These grants will help ensure consumers' rights are protected, and they are another way the new law is putting patients, not insurance companies, in charge of their health care.”

These new grants will allow states, who are in some cases partnering with local non-profits, to help strengthen and enhance ongoing efforts in the states and local communities to protect consumers from some of the worst insurance industry practices. Altogether, 35 states, four territories and the District of Columbia applied for and will receive grant awards.

The grants will build on other programs and initiatives recently announced by HHS to help consumers make decisions about their care, including www.HealthCare.gov, where consumers already 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. State consumer assistance programs also will help consumers act on their new right to appeal if their insurance plan denies them coverage. Specifically, these grants will:

- Help consumers enroll in health coverage;
- Help consumers file complaints and appeals against health plans;
- Educate consumers about their rights and empower them to take action; and
- Track consumer complaints to help identify problems and strengthen enforcement.

A fact sheet and summary of how each state or territory will use the new resources can be found at <http://www.healthcare.gov/news/factsheets/CAPGrants.html>.

Consumer Assistance Grants have the potential to benefit millions of Americans. These grants will fund programs that will support consumers both now as we transition to a more competitive, patient-centered health insurance marketplace in 2014 and once that new marketplace is established.

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Note: All HHS press releases, fact sheets and other press materials are available at <http://www.hhs.gov/news>.

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