

HHS NEWS

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HHS announces new grants and programs from the Affordable Care Act to help people navigate health and long-term care options

\$68 million in grants to support community living for seniors and individuals with disabilities

HHS Secretary Kathleen Sebelius today announced \$68 million in grants to help seniors, individuals with disabilities, and caregivers better understand and navigate their health and long-term care options.

"We know how difficult it can be for individuals and caregivers to deal with a sudden illness or chronic disease while at the same time trying to navigate through a complex health care system to figure out where to go to get appropriate help. The Affordable Care Act seeks to give people more control over their own care, while lowering health care costs and improving quality," said Secretary Sebelius.

These grants, made possible by the Affordable Care Act, are going to states, territories, tribal and community-based organizations. The funds will be used to help seniors and individuals with disabilities and their caregivers make more informed decisions about their health and long-term care. Specifically, the funds will be used to help families: understand their Medicare and Medicaid benefits, including coverage for preventive services; navigate options for long term care including community-based services that can help individuals remain in their homes; and assist those transitioning from nursing or rehabilitation facilities back home to put the supports in place to make that transition successful.

These grants are being administered collaboratively by HHS' Administration on Aging (AoA) and the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS). AoA and CMS have provided grants to states for several years to develop person-centered, integrated systems of information and counseling to help individuals learn about and access their health and long-term services and support options.

These grants complement President Obama's *Community Living Initiative*, which focuses on better serving those individuals with disabilities who need ongoing services and support programs in the community such as those provided by AoA, CMS and other HHS agencies.

Funds were available for states, area agencies on aging, State Health Insurance Assistance Programs; Aging and Disability Resource Centers (ADRCs) and tribal organizations through a competitive as well as formula process. Grantees will focus on four areas to support seniors, individuals with disabilities and family caregivers:

Medicare Outreach and Assistance in Low Income Programs and Prevention Grants: 50 states and territories and 125 tribal organizations have been funded to provide outreach and assistance to Medicare beneficiaries on their benefits, including coverage for preventive services. Additionally, \$5 million goes to the National Center for Benefits Outreach and Enrollment for technical assistance. (<http://www.centerforbenefits.org/>)

ADRC Options Counseling Grants: 20 states funded to strengthen Aging and Disability Resource Centers (ADRCs) Options Counseling and Assistance Programs for community-based health and long-term care services. Options counseling programs help people understand, evaluate, and manage the full range of services and supports available in their community.

ARDC Nursing Home Transition through *Money Follows the Person* Grants: 24 states funded to strengthen the ADRCs role in the CMS Money Follows the Person program and support state Medicaid agencies as they transition individuals from nursing homes to community-based care.

Evidence Based Care Transition Grants: 16 states funded to coordinate and continue to encourage evidence-based care transition models which help older persons or persons with disabilities remain in their own homes after a hospital, rehabilitation or skilled nursing facility stay. These grants will help break the cycle of readmission to the hospital that occurs when an individual is discharged into the community without the social services and supports they need.

"When it comes to long-term health care, each patient has a unique mix of medical and social needs that must be considered," said Dr. Donald Berwick, CMS Administrator. "Our health care system can offer many options to meeting those needs from traditional nursing home care to home and community-based services. Helping patients and their families understand these options will help them make informed decisions about long-term care that are in the patient's best interests. These grants will help families make informed decisions and make sure patients have more control over their own care."

"AoA's national network of state, tribal and community-based organizations has long served as the central, trusted resource for individuals and families seeking information to address health and long-term care challenges. These grants will further strengthen the network's capacity to help people in a more comprehensive way in the communities where they live," said Kathy Greenlee, assistant secretary for aging.

The announcement combines funding opportunities from several provisions in the Affordable Care Act signed into law by President Obama on March 23, 2010, including the Role of Public Programs (Title II, Sections 2403 – Money Follows the Person and 2405 – Funding for Aging and Disability Resource Centers) and Improving the Quality and Efficiency of Health Care (Title III, Section 3306 - Funding for Outreach and Assistance for Low-Income Programs).

For a full funding chart that includes states and tribes, visit http://www.aoa.gov/Aging_Statistics/Health_care_reform.aspx#map.

For more information about the Administration on Aging and its programs and services, please visit: www.aoa.gov.
For more information about the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, please visit www.cms.gov.

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