

U.S. House and Senate Notification

Wednesday, February 16, 2011

To: Congressional Health Staff

**From: Amy Hall, Director, Office of Legislation
Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services**

**Re: States Leading the Way on Implementation: HHS Awards “Early Innovator”
Grants to Seven States**

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) announced the award of seven cooperative agreements to help a group of “Early Innovator” States design and implement the Information Technology (IT) infrastructure needed to operate Health Insurance Exchanges on February 16, 2011. These States are leading the way on building a better health insurance marketplace, one that allows individuals and small-business owners to pool their purchasing power to negotiate lower rates. Using these new funds, the Early Innovator States will develop Exchange IT models that can be adopted and tailored by other States.

Kansas, Maryland, New York, Oklahoma, Oregon, Wisconsin and a multi-state consortia led by the University of Massachusetts Medical School will receive a total of approximately \$241 million.

Starting in 2014, Exchanges will help individuals and small employers shop for, select, and enroll in high-quality, affordable private health plans that fit their individual needs at competitive prices. By providing a place for one-stop shopping, Exchanges will make purchasing health insurance easier and more understandable.

Information on how much each state or consortium will receive and how each will use the grant funds is available at

www.HealthCare.gov/news/factsheets/exchanges02162011a.html

If you have any questions regarding this announcement, please contact the CMS Office of Legislation at 202-690-8220. Thank you.