

February 13, 2012
Washington, D.C.

Good morning and thank you for joining us as we release our Department's 2013 budget.

I am proud to be joined by our Department's senior leaders. They are just a few of the many dedicated and talented men and women at HHS who come to work every day and do their part to deliver essential services to families around the country. These doctors, nurses, scientists, social workers and other incredible professionals are testament to the fact that our Department's greatest resource is its people.

The budget we are announcing today strengthens our nation's health care, supports the innovation and research that will lead to tomorrow's treatments and cures, and promotes opportunity for America's children and families so everyone has a chance to reach their full potential.

This budget also recognizes our solemn responsibility to safeguard taxpayer dollars -- and to make the most of every investment by spending wisely. It will help create an economy that is built to last.

The entire budget is on our website. But right now, I'd like to briefly review a few key points and then, with my colleagues, take some of your questions.

Over the last 2 years, we have worked diligently to deliver the benefits of the Affordable Care Act to the American people. We are protecting Americans from the worst insurance company abuses, making health care more affordable and providing better access to care.

Already more than two and a half million additional young people are getting coverage through their parents' health plans. More than 25 million seniors have taken advantage of free recommended preventive services under Medicare. And small business owners are getting tax breaks on their health care bills that allow them to hire more employees.

This year, we will keep up this important work to bring our health insurance market in line with America's values with continued support in our budget to help states establish Affordable Insurance Exchanges, the competitive marketplaces that in 2014 will ensure that all Americans have access to quality, affordable health coverage.

Because we know that a lack of insurance is not the only obstacle to care, our budget also invests in our health care workforce. The budget supports the placement of more than 7,100 primary care providers in underserved areas.

And it also invests in expanding America's network of community health centers. Together with 2012 resources, our budget will create more than 240 new access points for patient care. And overall, our investment in health centers will provide access to quality care for 21 million people, 300,000 more patients than last year, in addition to creating new jobs across the country.

An economy built to last should also have the strongest health infrastructure in the world.

Our budget ensures that 21st-century America will continue to lead the world in biomedical research by maintaining funding for the world's leading researchers at the National Institutes of Health. And to make sure this research translates into health innovations that improve people's lives, we will also

enhance the new National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences, where we work closely with partners in the regulatory, academic, nonprofit, and private sectors to accelerate the development of new cures and treatments

Today's biomedical researchers represent some of the best and brightest minds in the U.S. But too many young children who could be tomorrow's scientists – or tomorrow's teachers, engineers, doctors, or architects – have their futures shortchanged because they start school already behind and never catch up.

We know that high quality early education programs put kids on a path to school success and opportunity. High quality early education doesn't just lead to higher test scores and graduation rates, it leads to more productive adults, stronger families, and more secure communities. That's why our budget increases funding to support the 962,000 children in Head Start and 1.5 million children in child care programs.

Our investments will also support critical reforms in both Head Start and child care programs – raising the bar on quality to ensure that these programs provide a pathway to success in school and in life. This year we will require Head Start programs that don't meet important quality benchmarks to compete for funding. And our budget supports a new Child Care Quality Initiative that will provide funds to states to invest directly in programs and teachers so that individual child care programs do a better job of meeting the needs of children and families.

The budget continues to support President Obama's historic push to stamp out waste, fraud, and abuse in our health care system. Over the last three years every dollar we have put into health care fraud and abuse control has returned more than \$7 – with \$10 billion in recoveries overall. Last year alone these efforts recovered more than \$4 billion. And our budget will build on those efforts by giving law enforcement the technology and data to spot fraud perpetrators early to prevent improper payments from happening in the first place.

Investing in health care, early education, cutting-edge medical research, and our other priorities requires resources, and that means that we have to set priorities, make difficult trade-offs, and ensure we use every dollar wisely.

Our budget makes those tough choices, helping reduce the deficit even while we invest in areas critical to our nation's future.

Our budget carefully reviewed every program, looking for opportunities to make them leaner and more effective. For example, at SAMHSA we can use our money more efficiently by building on the work of proven state grant programs and replicating the most innovative behavioral health prevention and treatment programs.

In many areas we made cuts because our nation's fiscal health and tight budget times demand action.

And our budget helps reduce the deficit by \$366 billion over 10 years, almost all of which comes from reforms to Medicare and Medicaid. These are significant but they are carefully crafted to protect beneficiaries. For example, we propose significant savings in Medicare by reducing drug costs.

Our budget makes smart investments to help create an economy that is built to last. It ensures millions of Americans will have access to the health care they need, it funds cutting-edge biomedical research, and it invests in our youngest children so that they achieve their fullest potential. It puts us all on a path to build a stronger, healthier, more prosperous America for the future.