

U.S. House and Senate Notification
Tuesday, February 2, 2010

To: Congressional Health Staff

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

Subject: CMS Releases Guidance Regarding CHIPRA Premium Assistance Option

Today, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) released the latest in a series of letters to State Health Officials regarding the implementation of the Children's Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act of 2009 (CHIPRA). This letter discusses the new opportunities included in CHIPRA for States to provide premium assistance for the purchase of employer-sponsored health insurance coverage to children under age 19 who are eligible for the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) or Medicaid. In some circumstances, family members who are not otherwise eligible for CHIP or Medicaid may also receive premium assistance when enrolled in qualified employer-sponsored coverage.

Premium assistance programs use Federal and State Medicaid and CHIP funds to help subsidize the purchase of group health coverage for children (and, in some circumstances, family members) who have access to employer-sponsored coverage, but may need assistance in paying for their premiums. Premium assistance is designed to make health care coverage more affordable for families. The CHIPRA premium assistance provisions build on lessons learned from State experiences with premium assistance programs, and are designed to reduce implementation barriers, such as providing a guaranteed right for CHIP and Medicaid individuals to enroll in a group health plan without having to wait for an open enrollment period if certain conditions are met.

The State Health Officials letter can be viewed at:
<http://www.cms.hhs.gov/SMDL/SHO/list.asp#TopOfPage>

If you have questions about this guidance, please contact the CMS Office of Legislation.

Thank you.