How does health care reform impact rural Arizona?

On March 23, 2010, President Obama signed historic health care reform legislation that provides for insurance market reforms, public health provisions, and workforce investment. An individual mandate requires that all individuals have coverage or pay a modest penalty starting in 2014; by 2016, the penalty will be $695 or 2.5% of taxable income. American Indians are exempt from this mandate. Employers will also be required to offer coverage or pay a fee. Individuals will be able to purchase insurance coverage through the state-based health insurance exchanges. The reform provisions will go into effect incrementally between now and 2014.

What provisions go into effect now?

- Inability to deny coverage to children with pre-existing conditions.
- Temporary coverage for those lacking insurance due to pre-existing conditions.
- By Sept 2010, insurance companies will no longer be able to drop people who become sick.
- By Sept 2010, young adults will be allowed to stay on their parents’ insurance through age 26.

How are women affected?

- Insurance companies no longer able to deny coverage based on pre-existing conditions by 2014.
- Companies cannot charge higher premiums based on gender or health-status.
- Cap on out-of-pocket expenses charged by insurance companies.
- Elimination of lifetime limits to insurance company coverage.
- By Sept 2010, preventative services will be exempt from co-pays and deductibles under private plans.
- Women who are currently covered by their husband’s employer or work part-time will have access to insurance through the exchanges.

How are rural Arizonans affected?

- Increases coverage for uninsured rural Arizonans and eliminates discriminatory insurance practices.
- Reauthorizes and amends the Indian Health Care Improvement Act.
- Increased funding to Community Health Centers to double patients over 5 years.
- Provides for a 10 percent incentive payment for primary care doctors practicing in underserved areas to build workforce.
- Provides $1.5 billion to expand the National Health Service Corps and supports training for rural primary care providers.
- Amends the Medicare reimbursement formula so rural doctors receive comparable pay to urban doctors.
- Provides improved Medicare reimbursement for rural hospitals.
Health care reform, from page 1

How does health care reform support public health?

- Establishes the National Prevention, Health Promotion and Public Health Council to coordinate federal prevention, wellness, and public health activities.
- Creates the Prevention and Public Health fund that expands investments in prevention and wellness activities.
- Establishes a community transformation grant program to support the delivery of evidence-based and community-based prevention and wellness services aimed at strengthening prevention activities, reducing chronic disease rates, and addressing health disparities. 20 percent of community transformation grants targeted to rural and frontier areas.

Health care reform is a complex topic, and this review does not encompass the entire breadth of the legislation. As the implications for improved care for rural Arizona women become clearer in the future, we will report on specific updates. In the meantime, more information is available online from the following resources:

Kaiser Family Foundation  
www.kff.org/healthreform/

The White House  
www.whitehouse.gov/health_reform

Rural Assistance Center  
www.raconline.org/info_guides/hot_topics/health_reform/

State, counties launch new site with AZ public health

Whether writing grants or conducting a survey of community health factors, having the right information at the right time is vital to those working in public health. To help facilitate the flow of information, the Arizona Department of Health Services and the 15 Arizona county health departments have launched www.arizonahealthmatters.org. The website, operated by The Healthy Communities Network, allows anyone interested to access to data and resources in one location. Depending on the topic area, data are available from the state level all the way down to specific zip codes. “Public Health is ready to move to the next level. We need to begin offering simple, practical public health ideas for decision makers to consider. Counties and communities need new tools to help develop priorities and goals for the people who live there,” said Will Humble, Director of Arizona Department of Health Services in a press release. “This website provides easy access to the most up-to-date information in a simple, comprehensive manner.”

Arizona Health Matters seeks to empower communities by making information available about how public health is affecting the lives of residents. Information is available about health, economics, government, natural environment, public safety, education, and transportation. The Report Assistant tool allows a user to type in key words and collect all available data from the site into a single file. The Community Snapshot function pulls together all the relevant data from a particular area, although the only information available at the Zip code level is socioeconomic. Health indicators are only reported on a county basis. The site will be continually updated as new information becomes available.
**Arizona, Pima County syphilis rates remain high**

Pima County has one of the highest rates of congenital syphilis in the nation and its health department is urging widespread testing, particularly for pregnant women who are at risk of a stillbirth if infected. The disease is being blamed for at least two stillbirths in Pima County last year, when there were seven suspected cases of congenital syphilis, in which babies are born with the disease. In 2008 there were 11 local congenital cases. “The lack of access to prenatal care is likely to be a huge factor,” said Dr. Michelle McDonald, chief medical officer for the Pima County Health Department. A federal report released Thursday says an increasing number of U.S. babies are being born with syphilis, putting those infants at risk for hearing, nerve, bone and brain damage. Those infants are also at risk for death. Antibiotic treatments even a month before birth could prevent damage. Arizona has been in the top five states for rate of congenital syphilis the last six years, McDonald said. Statewide, Arizona reports a disproportionately higher number of congenital syphilis cases among Hispanic women.

*Arizona Daily Star*

**State syphilis rate is high**

Arizona syphilis rate per 100,000 people: **22**

U.S. syphilis rate per 100,000 people: **15.1**

**Battered Immigrant Women Project training video**

The Pima County Battered Immigrant Women’s Task Force screened a new training and public awareness video for the Tucson public on April 20 as part of Victims of Crime Week and Sexual Assault Awareness Month. The video, “Liberty and Justice... For All,” highlights the stories of battered immigrant women who have successfully petitioned for immigration relief under the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA). The video provides an overview of the VAWA self-petition and U-Visa application process and eligibility requirements. The Battered Immigrant Women’s Task Forces in six Southern Arizona counties work to improve the access to culturally appropriate services for immigrant families who are victims of domestic and sexual violence, thereby ensuring their rights under VAWA. The Taskforce operates through a federal grant in partnership with The Governor’s Office for Children, Youth and Families - Division for Women, which coordinates this project.

To learn more about a VAWA training or sign up to receive a free copy of the video: Contact Montserrat Caballero, Pima County Taskforce Coordinator at (520) 434-0195 or mcaballero@arizonaschildren.org. The video and additional training materials will also be available later this summer on the Rural Health Office website.

**Breast Feeding Disparities**

The CDC recently released a report on racial and ethnic differences in breastfeeding initiation and duration nationally and by state. The data support previous estimates that suggest Hispanics overall have slightly higher rates of breastfeeding initiation than non-Hispanic whites. However, in Arizona, non-Hispanic Whites have a slightly higher rate of breastfeeding initiation than Hispanics, a slightly greater disparity at 6 months, and equal prevalence at 12 months. Overall, women in Arizona have better breastfeeding outcomes than the national average. Nationally, black women have the poorest breastfeeding outcomes

**Arizona Breastfeeding Initiation**

Hispanic - 81.4%

White, non-Hispanic - 84.9%

**Prevalence at 6 months**

Hispanic - 42.1%

White, non-Hispanic - 50.8%

**Prevalence at 12 months**

Hispanic - 23.1%

White, non-Hispanic - 23.1%

**NATIONAL Breastfeeding Initiation**

Hispanic - 80.4%

White, non-Hispanic - 74.3%

Black, non-Hispanic - 54.4%

**Prevalence at 6 months**

Hispanic - 45.1%

White, non-Hispanic - 43.2%

Black, non-Hispanic - 26.6%

**Prevalence at 12 months**

Hispanic - 24.0%

White, non-Hispanic - 21.4%

Black, non-Hispanic - 11.7%

**Full report:** [http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5911a2.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5911a2.htm)
May 9-15, 2010: National Women’s Health Week

The theme of this year’s National Women’s Health Week is “It’s Your Time.” The goal of the weeklong observance is to encourage women to adopt behaviors for a longer, healthier, happier life. To learn more about planning a women’s health event in your area, including activity planning resources and an option to register your event to be posted to the women’s health website, visit: http://www.womenshealth.gov/whw/
The CDC also has additional resources and more suggestions for observe women’s health week in your area: http://www.cdc.gov/women/nwhw/celebratenwhw.htm

Selected Women’s Health Week Events

**Walk for Women’s Health**
- **Date:** May 15, 2010
- **Time:** 9 a.m.
- **Location:** White Mountain Regional Medical Center to Ramsey Park, 118 South Mountain Ave. Springerville/Eagar, AZ
- **Sponsors:** Apache County Public Health Services District and White Mountain Regional Medical Center with volunteer services provided by Apache County Medical Reserve Corps
- **Overview:** 5k Walk to promote Women’s Health with educational booths
- **Topics:** Clinical screening and exam, educational sessions including general wellness, HIV and STI prevention and/or treatment, intimate partner violence, nutrition, physical activity and fitness, and smoking cessation
- **Contact:** Jean Wilson, (928) 333-5569 x2, jwilson@co.apache.az.us

**Healthy Kitchens Food Fair**
- **Date:** May 10 - 13, 2010
- **Location:** Platicamos Salud classroom/kitchen/gym, 3241 N. Grand Ave, Nogales, AZ
- **Sponsors:** Mariposa Community Health Center with partnership from the Nogales Foodbank, WIC, and Santa Cruz Community Foundation
- **Overview:** This 3-day Food Fair will focus on a different health issue each day with kitchen-based health education demonstration delivered by an experience Promatora. Day 1 will focus on hypertension, Day 2 will feature diabetes, and Day 3 will focus on obesity by teaching participants how to substitute high calorie ingredients with lower calorie ingredients in a typical Mexican meal.
- **Topics:** heart health, nutrition
- **Contact:** Rosie Piper, (520) 375-6056 rpiper@mariposachc.net

For additional information, contact: Rebecca Ruiz (520) 626-2243 rarui@email.arizona.edu
UPCOMING EVENTS

APRIL
National Infant Immunization Week
• Dates: April 24-May 1, 2010

Health Care Reform Webinar: Implications for Disparities in Health and Health Care
• Date: April 29, 2010
• Time: 12 - 1 p.m. EST; 9 - 10 a.m. Arizona time
• Register at: http://www.bsonlinemeetings.com/phs/

Preconception Health Conference: A Life Course Perspective
• Date: April 30, 2010
• Presented by: The March of Dimes Arizona Chapter
• Location: Black Canyon Conference Center, 9440 N. 25th Avenue, Phoenix, AZ
• Contact: Sandy LeClaire (602) 287-9921 sleclaire@marchofdimes.com

MAY
National Women’s Health Check-Up Day (part of Women’s Health Week)
• Date: May 10, 2010
• Goal: To encourage women to use the many high-quality preventive care services available to them through the Nation’s health centers.
• Info: www.womenshealth.gov/whw

Preconception Health Conference: A Life Course Perspective
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• Presented by: The March of Dimes Arizona Chapter
• Location: Black Canyon Conference Center, 9440 N. 25th Avenue, Phoenix, AZ
• Contact: Sandy LeClaire (602) 287-9921 sleclaire@marchofdimes.com

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17th Annual Arizona Immunization Conference
• Presented by: Arizona Immunization Program Office, Arizona Department of Health Services
• Date: May 18-19, 2010
• Location: Black Canyon Conference Center, 9440 N. 25th Avenue, Phoenix, AZ
• Contact: www.azdhs.gov/phs/immun/conf.htm

National Osteoporosis Awareness and Prevention Month
• Dates: May 1-31, 2010

National Teen Pregnancy Prevention Month
• Dates: May 1-31, 2010

EDITOR’S NOTE

The Arizona Rural Women’s Health Initiative (AzRWHi) is a project of the Rural Health Office of The University of Arizona’s Mel and Enid Zuckerman College of Public Health.

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FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

• Fiscal Year 2010 Tribal Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Coalitions Program & Special Tribal Sexual Assault Coalition Program
  Deadline: May 4, 2010
  Purpose: For the development and operation of tribal domestic violence and sexual assault coalitions in Indian country.
  Contact: http://www07.grants.gov/search/search.do?&mode=VIEW&oppid=53223

• Robert Wood Johnson Foundation - Peaceful Pathways: Reducing Exposure to Violence
  Purpose: New, community-based projects to reduce violence in traditionally underserved communities that are defined by race, ethnicity, tribe, gender, sexual identity or rural/frontier location.
  Deadline: May 5, 2010
  Contact: http://www.rwjf.org/applications/solicited/cfp.jsp?ID=20981

• Attorney General’s Children Exposed to Violence Demonstration Program
  Deadline: June 1, 2010 (Phase 1)
  Purpose: To develop and support comprehensive community-based strategic planning to prevent and reduce the impact of children’s exposure to violence in their homes, schools, and communities.

• Women Helping Others Foundation
  Deadline: September 7, 2010
  Purpose: To support community-focused charities that serve the overlooked needs of women, children and families in the United States and Puerto Rico.
  Grant Range: $1,000 - $4,000 each
  Contact: http://www.whofoundation.org/Funding/Who_funding.asp