

Health Care Reform

Forum on High Risk Pools

The recently enacted health care reform legislation, the Patient *Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA)*, contains a provision to provide those with pre-existing conditions immediate access to health coverage. Section 1101 creates a \$5 billion temporary high risk health insurance pool program that will operate until 2014. Some states have opted to run their own pool, while others are relying on HHS to make the pool operational in their state. The new temporary high risk pool program is distinct from the 35 existing state high risk pools.

High risk health insurance pools are programs that provide health coverage to people who are otherwise unable to secure coverage in the individual market due to a pre-existing condition or whose coverage is unaffordable. Currently, state high risk pools are available in 35 states, and an estimated 207,000 people receive health coverage through these pools. High risk pools have served as a last resort for some of our nation's sickest and most vulnerable. The new federal temporary high risk pool program is an important step to building on the successes of the State High Risk Pool Program, however several questions have been raised regarding the interaction of the two programs, the eligibility criteria, and the adequacy of the funding levels for both programs.

The briefing will allow Members of Congress and staff to learn more about the state high risk pool and the temporary high risk pool programs and ask the expert panel members common questions that Congressional offices are facing regarding the implementation of the new program. Please join us.

- WHO:** Coalition for Affordable Health Coverage
- WHAT:** Panel discussion of high risk health insurance pools.
- Richard Popper, Department of Health and Human Services
 - Wayne Nelson, President, Communicating for America
 - Joel White, Executive Director, CAHC
- WHEN:** Wednesday, June 28th, 9:30 am – 11:00 am. Refreshments Provided.
- WHERE:** House Visitors Center- Room HVC-201