HHS Announces First 26 Health Care Innovation Awards

Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary Kathleen Sebelius today announced the first batch of organizations for Health Care Innovation awards. Made possible by the health care law – the Affordable Care Act – the awards will support 26 innovative projects nationwide that will save money, deliver high quality medical care and enhance the health care workforce. The preliminary awardees announced today expect to reduce health spending by $254 million over the next 3 years.

“We can’t wait to support innovative projects that will save money and make our health care system stronger,” said Secretary Sebelius. “It’s yet another way we are supporting local communities now in their efforts to provide better care and lower cost.”

The new projects include collaborations of leading hospitals, doctors, nurses, pharmacists, technology innovators, community-based organizations, and patients’ advocacy groups, among others, located in urban and rural areas that will begin work this year to address health care issues in local communities. This initiative allows applicants to come up with their best ideas to test how we can quickly and efficiently improve the quality and affordability of health care.

Projects include:

- Emory University’s collaboration with area health systems to train health professionals and use tele-health technologies to link critical care units in rural Georgia to critical care doctors in Atlanta hospitals. This project aims to save money and improve the quality of care by reducing the need to transfer patients from rural hospitals to critical care units in Atlanta;
- Courage Center, which is a program in Minneapolis-St. Paul serving adults with disabilities and complex medical conditions. The grant will enable Courage Center to save money and improve the quality of care by creating a patient-centered medical home focused on highest-cost Medicaid patients;
- A University Hospitals of Cleveland initiative to increase access and care coordination for children beyond the walls of the doctor’s office. This initiative aims to save money and improve the quality of care by extending the expertise of an elite children’s hospital to local pediatric practices treating children with complex chronic conditions and behavioral health problems with physician extension teams and tele-health.

Preliminary awardees were chosen for their innovative solutions to the health care challenges facing their communities and for their focus on creating a well-trained

health care workforce that is equipped to meet the need for new jobs in the 21st century health system. The Bureau of Labor Statistics projects the health care and social assistance sector will gain the most jobs between now and 2020.

Today's awards total $122.6 million. The Center for Medicare and Medicaid Innovation within the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services at HHS administers the awards through cooperative agreements over 3 years.

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