

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES  
Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services  
Room 352-G  
200 Independence Avenue, SW  
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**Office of Communications**

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## MEDICARE NEWS

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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Contact: CMS Media Relations Group

(202) 690-6145

### **Affordable Care Act program to help healthcare professionals improve care for patients and reduce costs in their communities**

Today, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services announced that it was accepting applications for a new Innovation Advisors program to help health professionals deepen skills that will drive improvements to patient care and reduce costs. These health care improvements will benefit people enrolled in Medicare, Medicaid, and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). Made possible by the Affordable Care Act, this initiative will be managed by the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Innovation (Innovation Center).

“We seek to support and expand the number of health care leaders with the knowledge and the vision to find innovative ways to improve care for patients and use our healthcare dollars more wisely,” said CMS Administrator Don Berwick, M.D. “The CMS Innovation Center is an ideal host for this network of experts. It will support their work on efforts that can strengthen public-private partnerships and ensure patients can spend more time with their doctor and get higher-quality care and lower costs.”

Under the new program, there will be up to 200 Innovation Advisors, including clinicians, allied health professionals, health administrators and others. They will attend in-person meetings as well as remote sessions to expand their skills and knowledge, and apply what they learn in their organizations and areas.

After an initial, intensive orientation phase, Innovation Advisors will work with the Innovation Center to test new models of care delivery in their own organizations and communities. They will also create partnerships to find new ideas that work and share them regionally and across the United States.

Innovation Advisors will be expected to commit up to 10 hours per week to the Innovation Advisor Program during the initial six months of the program, with part of that time devoted to seminars and instruction. The rest of that time will be devoted to implementing the improvement project they propose

in their initial application. The Innovation Advisors who are selected will meet regularly to exchange insights, report on successes and discuss common challenges.

This initiative is just one of a number of efforts made possible by the Affordable Care Act to help bring better health and better health care not just to Medicare beneficiaries, but also to all Americans, while helping use healthcare dollars more wisely. Already, more than 5,000 organizations have joined the Partnership for Patients and pledged to reduce hospital-acquired conditions and improve transitions in care. The Bundled Payments for Care Improvement initiative will give providers flexibility to work together to coordinate care for patients over the course of a single episode of an illness. The Comprehensive Primary Care Initiative will allow CMS and other payers, such as employer-based health plans, to align strategies designed to strengthen primary care services delivered to Medicare beneficiaries.

Applications for the Innovation Advisors program are due on November 15, 2011. Applications will be reviewed and Innovation Advisors will be notified of their selection by mid-December 2011.

More information, including a fact sheet, frequently asked questions, application and terms and conditions can be found at: <http://innovations.cms.gov/innovation-advisors-program>.

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