

## **Moving Forward...Protecting Our Care in Rural Areas**

March 23<sup>rd</sup> marks the one year anniversary of the Affordable Care Act being signed into law. While Republicans want to re-fight the same old political wars to give control over your health care back to insurance companies, it's time to move forward to protect our health care in rural communities. Moving forward means getting more doctors and nurses to practice in rural areas and access to quality care. Moving forward means investing in our Community Health Centers. It means holding insurance companies accountable by ending some of the worst abuses like discriminating based on a pre-existing condition or dropping coverage when you get sick. It's time to move forward. We cannot afford to go back.

**The Affordable Care Act Encourages More Doctors And Nurses In Rural Areas.** The Affordable Care Act uses more scholarships and loan repayments to encourage doctors and nurses practice in rural areas. The law helps reach the goal of training and placing 16,000 primary care providers in the most needed areas over the next five years. [Healthcare.gov, [The Affordable Care Act – What it Means for Rural Americans](#)]

**The Affordable Care Act Invests \$11 Billion For Community Health Centers That Are Critical For Rural Health Care.** The Affordable Care Act recognizes the vital role community health centers play in rural America and invests \$11 billion in them over the next five years which will allow 20 million more patients to see a doctor. Community health centers have become the primary medical home for millions of Americans, particularly in rural areas. They emphasize coordinated primary and preventive services that cut health disparities. They treat people who are sick early instead of having them seek help at the hospital emergency room, saving billions of dollars annually. [Healthcare.gov, [Community Health Centers and the Affordable Care Act: Increasing Access to Affordable, Cost Effective, High Quality Care](#)]

**The Affordable Care Act Allows Rural Americans To Band Together To Lower Costs And Have More Choices.** The Affordable Care Act provides rural Americans more freedom and control over their own health care. Most rural states are dominated by one or two major insurance companies leaving residents to choose between an uncompetitive market and “fly-by-night” carriers that offer low premiums but very few benefits. The law allows individuals and small businesses to band together in state marketplaces where you can shop and pick a quality health care plan that fits you. This competition and choice will lower costs for everyone. [Whitehouse.gov, [Health Reform for Rural Americans](#)]

**The Affordable Care Act Helps Make It More Affordable For Small Businesses To Afford Health Coverage For Workers.** Nearly two out of three rural Americans work for a small business. The Affordable Care Act lowers health care costs for small businesses. Right now, 4 million small businesses have access to tax credits to help with the cost of health premiums. Lower premiums means small businesses have the opportunity to offer their employees coverage, and not having to put the costs of providing health care over hiring more workers. [Whitehouse.gov, [Health Reform for Rural Americans](#); Small Business Majority, [July 2010](#)]

**The Affordable Care Act Ends The Worst Insurance Company Abuses Such As Denying Coverage Because Of A Pre-Existing Condition.** The Affordable Care Act ends some of the worst insurance company practices. Already, the law bans insurance companies from dropping coverage when you get sick and excluding children with pre-ex conditions from coverage. Those protections will be extended to everyone in 2014. [WhiteHouse.gov, Fact Sheet: The Six Month Anniversary of the Affordable Care Act, [9/22/10](#)]

**The Affordable Care Act Provides Preventive Services To Encourage Early Treatment And Detection With No Co-Pay.** Because of the Affordable Care Act, you may be eligible for some preventive services at no additional cost, meaning you do not have to pay a copayment, co-insurance or deductible to obtain these services. These services include: blood pressure, diabetes and cholesterol tests; cancer screenings; routine vaccinations; well-child visits; and counseling on healthy lifestyles. [Healthcare.gov, [Preventive Care and Services](#)]