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Dear CAFP Member:

The national health care reform law, the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA), was signed by President Obama six months ago today. The law remains misunderstood by many and opinions diverge as to its potential impact on our health care system. Whatever your position is on reform, know that CAFP fought hard to ensure that the interests of family physicians and our patients were well served by the law, and will continue this fight.

Implementation of PPACA is an on-going process with numerous opportunities and some potential challenges. We must work to see that PPACA's implementation serves the best interests of family physicians and our patients. With this goal in mind, CAFP launches our revamped [Health Care Reform web page TODAY](#). While a number of reputable organizations have launched comprehensive websites on reform (please see the links below), CAFP's site focuses on opportunities created by the law for family physicians and our patients. Included is information on:


- [Maximizing payment opportunities](#);
- [Understanding changes in scholarship and loan programs](#); and
- [Reviewing provisions that have rolled out thus far](#).

Many of those provisions take effect TODAY, including:

- Elimination of barriers to insurance for children with preexisting health conditions;
- Prohibition on lifetime coverage limits and low annual coverage limits; and
- Prohibition on rescinding coverage when patients become ill.

In my view, PPACA has the potential to save patient lives and improve the standing of primary care in our health care system. It will enable millions of California's estimated 8.2 million uninsured to find affordable coverage in a variety of ways, including through an improved Medi-Cal program, employer-based health insurance and a health insurance exchange. PPACA will remove the financial barriers that often prevent patients from seeking care or successfully following treatments recommended by their physicians. Family physicians, as patient advocates, should be pleased with this advance in patient care and coverage.

PPACA also takes steps to improve the professional lives of family physicians. It begins to address the financial viability of family medicine and the family physician shortage by improving payment and increasing funding for scholarship and loan programs. It supports and invests in new models for the delivery of health care, such as the Patient Centered Medical Home, and other care-coordination and disease-management models. It establishes the National Health Care Workforce Commission, charged with addressing the needs of primary care physicians. CAFP asks you to view the six-month anniversary of the law as an opportunity for positive change and explore these new pages with the goal of strengthening your practice and the health of your patients. The promise of PPACA can be fulfilled if we all work hard to improve and expand upon its best features.



Sincerely,

Jack Chou, MD
President
California Academy of Family Physicians

At the six-month anniversary of PPACA, many new resources from respected organizations are available:

- The Kaiser Foundation has launched a comprehensive website on reform, “Health Reform Source,” (<http://healthreform.kff.org/>) explaining, analyzing and tracking the law’s implementation.
- The California Health Care Foundation’s health reform website (<http://www.chcf.org/programs/healthreform>) supports implementation of reform in a way that advances the effectiveness of California’s public coverage programs.
- The California Endowment has launched “GetCoveredCA,” (<http://www.getcoveredca.org/>) a consumer-oriented website and social media campaign to explain what the law covers and how to get the most out of it.
- The federal government has launched a consumer-oriented site in English (<http://www.healthcare.gov/>) and Spanish (<http://www.cuidadodesalud.gov/enes/>), to help patients understand the new law, their insurance options and optimal illness prevention strategies.