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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 15, 2011

Contact: HRSA Press Office
(301) 443-3376

HHS awards Affordable Care Act funds for organizations to become community health centers

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius today announced awards totaling \$10 million to aid 129 organizations across the country that would like to become community health centers. These funds, made available by the Affordable Care Act, support organizations' development as a future health center.

Health centers improve the health of the nation and assure access to quality primary health care services at more than 8,100 service delivery sites around the country. Health centers provide comprehensive, high-quality preventive and primary health care to patients regardless of their ability to pay; charges for services are set according to income.

"Supporting the development of new community health centers will help us meet the healthcare needs of millions while supporting local jobs and economic growth in communities nationwide," said Secretary Sebelius.

Community health centers are also an integral source of local employment and economic growth in many underserved and low-income communities. Since the beginning of 2009, health centers across the country have added more than 18,600 new full-time positions in many of the nation's most economically distressed communities. In 2010, they employed more than 131,000 staff and new funds, made available by HHS last week, will help create thousands more jobs nationwide.

Today's awards fund several community-based entities seeking to provide a more comprehensive range of primary health care services and/or expand their services to the larger community. These include seven organizations traditionally focused on Tribal/Urban Indian health, five targeting mental health services, four geared toward HIV/AIDS services, three focused on faith-based initiatives, and one senior center. The funding announced today will help these organizations plan for the development of a comprehensive primary care health center, so that they can provide care for some of the nation's most vulnerable populations and potentially create more high-quality jobs in the future for their communities.

"The Health Center Planning Grants help organizations plan to become health centers," said HRSA Administrator Mary K. Wakefield, Ph.D., R.N. "These awards demonstrate HRSA's commitment to expanding access to quality preventive and primary health care in high need areas across the country."

Eligible applicants included public or nonprofit private entities, including tribal, faith-based and community-based organizations. Current Health Center Program grantees were not eligible.

To see Health Center Planning Grants, listed by organization and state, visit:
<http://www.hrsa.gov/about/news/2011tables/1108healthcenterplanning.html>

To learn more about the Affordable Care Act, visit www.healthcare.gov.

To learn more about HRSA's Community Health Center Program, visit <http://bphc.hrsa.gov/about/index.html>.

To find a health center in your area, visit <http://findahealthcenter.hrsa.gov>.

The Health Resources and Services Administration is part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. HRSA is the primary Federal agency responsible for improving access to health care services for people who are uninsured, isolated, or medically vulnerable. For more information about HRSA and its programs, visit www.hrsa.gov.

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Note: All HHS press releases, fact sheets and other press materials are available at <http://www.hhs.gov/news>.

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