

HEALTH REFORM IMPACT

What you need to know NOW

NEWS FOR THE CLIENTS AND FRIENDS OF BASS, BERRY & SIMS PLC

The Forecast For Healthcare Jobs: A Bright Spot Gets Brighter With Funding For Expansion Of Primary Care Workforce

July 8, 2010

The Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services ("HHS") recently announced a series of new investments totaling \$250 million that will go toward strengthening the primary healthcare workforce in the U.S. The investments are made possible by new funding provided under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act ("the Act"). According to HHS, various areas across the country suffer from a shortage of primary care providers because of an aging population and a decline in the number of medical students that choose to go into primary care. Accordingly, the \$250 million investment is aimed at training thousands of new primary care providers over the next five years.

Section 4002 of the Act establishes the Prevention and Public Health Fund (the "Fund"). The Secretary has the power to transfer money out of the Fund in order "to provide for expanded and sustained national investment in prevention and public health programs to improve health and help restrain the rate of growth in private and public sector healthcare costs." Beginning with the year 2010, Section 4002 allocates a certain amount of money into the Fund. The amount for fiscal year 2010 is \$500 million and increases each subsequent year, maxing out at \$2 billion for fiscal year 2015 and each year thereafter.

According to HHS, half of 2010's appropriated amount will be used for the strengthening and expansion of the primary care workforce in the U.S. The purported goal is to prevent disease, manage chronic conditions, and increase access to preventive care by building a primary care workforce that is able and equipped to meet the demand for primary care services. Specifically, the \$250 million investment is allocated as follows:

1. \$168 million is for training more than 500 new primary care physicians by 2015;
2. \$32 million is for training more than 600 new physician assistants who will practice primary care medicine under a supervising physician;
3. \$30 million is for encouraging more than 600 nursing students to attend school full-time in order to increase the probability that they will complete their education;

4. \$15 million is for the establishment and operation of 10 nurse-managed health clinics which will provide primary care services in medically underserved communities; and
5. \$5 million is for encouraging states to plan for an expansion of their respective primary care workforce by 10 to 25 percent over a span of 10 years.

It appears that HHS has not yet issued any information on who will be eligible for these funds, how the funds will be distributed, or the precise manner and time frame in which the appropriated amount will be used. We will continue to provide updates as such information becomes available.

If you have any questions about HHS' announcement, please contact any of our Labor and Employment attorneys listed below.

Also, please [click here](#) to visit our special Web page for Health Reform IMPACT.

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