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HHS Makes \$1.6 Million in Recovery Act Funding Available to West Virginia to Support Hospitals Serving Uninsured, Vulnerable Americans

Building on President Barack Obama's efforts to ensure access to health care for millions of uninsured Americans, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services today announced that West Virginia can access an additional \$1.6 million authorized by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act to help pay hospitals to treat their most vulnerable patients.

"Millions of people rely on the care provided by their community hospitals," said Acting HHS Secretary Charles Johnson. "Through the help provided by the Recovery Act, we can make sure they continue to get the care they need in those hospitals."

Eligible hospitals are those that serve a disproportionate share of low-income or uninsured individuals and are known as Disproportionate Share Hospitals (DSH). States receive an annual allotment to make payments to DSH hospitals to account for higher costs associated with treating uninsured and low-income patients. This annual allotment is calculated by law and includes requirements to ensure that the DSH payments to hospitals are not higher than the actual costs incurred by the hospital to provide the uncompensated care. The Recovery Act increases the amount of allotments available to states nationwide from approximately \$11.06 billion to \$11.33 billion for 2009.

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) will notify states about the availability of the increased portion of allotments for hospitals. Not all states spend their full DSH allotments; so, before this new funding can be accessed, states must demonstrate they have used all of their existing fiscal year 2009 DSH allotments. States must request the additional funds from CMS as part of their quarterly Medicaid budget request and the funds will be distributed as separate Recovery Act DSH grants.

"Thousands of hospitals around the country are the first place many families take their sick children for care or the only place where some of the more than 45 million uninsured Americans can receive some form of health care," said Acting HHS Secretary Johnson. "The funding from the Recovery Act will help ensure hospitals can keep their doors open to the people who need care most."

To see a complete list of the revised DSH allotments that include additional funding provided through the Recovery Act, please visit <http://www.hhs.gov/recovery/cms/dshstates.html>.

The activities described in this release are being funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). To track the progress of HHS activities funded through the ARRA, visit www.hhs.gov/recovery. To track all federal funds provided through the ARRA, visit www.recovery.gov.

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