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Affordable Care Act: Implementation Update

As the deadline to sign up for health insurance coverage through the new federal and state marketplaces neared on March 31, a surge in enrollments carried the number of purchasers over the [6 million](#) mark— inching closer to the Obama Administration’s initial target of 7 million. The tendency of people to procrastinate until faced with a deadline, along with an intense media campaign featuring the president himself, likely fueled the sudden increase in enrollments.

Last week, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) [announced](#) it would extend the March 31 deadline for signing up for health care for those who encountered trouble completing enrollment. The “special enrollment period” is intended to target people who began the enrollment process before the deadline but encountered technical problems or had complicated family situations.

Earlier in the month, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) adjusted coverage rules for existing health insurance policies that do not meet the robust standards for coverage set by the Affordable Care Act (ACA). The agency permitted a [transitional policy](#), allowing individuals with sub-standard coverage to retain their current health plans through 2016 without tax penalty. Under this transitional policy, states ultimately choose whether or not to permit insurance companies to issue plans that fall short of the ACA guidelines.

President Obama’s FY15 Budget: The Essentials

President Obama’s FY15 budget would expand key programs that promote access to care, but it also sets priorities that will generate concern in the dental education community. Of particular note, the budget proposes the elimination of funding for two programs in which many ADEA member institutions participate:

- Area Health Education Centers (AHEC) and
- Health Careers Opportunity Program (HCOP).

Three other programs of special interest to academic dentistry fare better under the president’s FY15 budget, with funding remaining flat:

- The Ryan White Dental Reimbursement Program - [Part F](#) at \$13 million,
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s Division of Oral Health ([CDC DOH](#)) at \$16 million, and
- National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research ([NIDCR](#)) at \$397 million.

The budget expands funding for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), but the discretionary portion of that budget, which funds programs of importance to academic dentistry, is slightly smaller than in the HHS budget for FY14. HHS administers Title VII of the Public Health Service Act, which strives to increase the size and diversity of the public health workforce. Funding for Title VII is set at \$216 million and contains allocations for specific programs, including:

- \$1 million for faculty loan repayment,
- \$32 million for oral health training,
- \$45 million for health professions training for diversity,
- \$5 million for health workforce information and analysis, and
- \$10 million to support a new Clinical Training in Interprofessional Practice program to “increase the capacity of community-based primary health care teams to deliver quality care.”

The White House highlighted new funding in the proposed budget that would extend access to care to more Americans in need of health services. Funding for the National Health Service Corps ([NHSC](#)) would increase by half a billion dollars in FY15, rising from \$283 million in FY14 to \$810 million. This additional investment would come to almost \$4 billion over six years and allow NHSC to place 15,000 health care providers in underserved areas. The budget includes a legislative proposal to transfer some Medicare funding to the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) for this purpose.

Community health centers also stand to benefit under the proposed budget, which would allocate \$4.5 billion in new resources for the centers over the next three years.

Department of Education Releases Proposed Gainful Employment Rules

On March 14, the U.S. Department of Education [released](#) its proposed regulations for determining whether certain postsecondary education programs, including allied or advanced dental education programs that award a certificate but not a degree, prepare students for gainful employment. The proposal met with immediate criticism from those on all sides of the debate.

In the department’s proposed regulations, nearly all programs at for-profit institutions, as well as certificate programs at public and private non-profit institutions, such as community colleges, would need to meet key requirements to establish that they sufficiently prepare students for gainful employment.

- Institutions must certify that all gainful employment programs (i.e., all certificate-awarding programs) meet applicable accreditation requirements and state or federal licensure standards.
- All gainful employment programs must pass metrics to continue eligibility in the student financial aid program, including: the estimated annual loan payment of typical graduates does not exceed 20% of their discretionary earnings or 8% of their total earnings and the default rate for former students does not exceed 30%.

- Additionally, institutions must publicly disclose information about the program costs, debt and performance of their gainful employment programs so that students can make informed decisions.

According to [information](#) released by the department, “students at for-profit colleges represent only about 13% of the total higher education population, but about 31% of all student loans and nearly half of all loan defaults. In the most recent data, about 22% of student borrowers at for-profit colleges defaulted on their loans within three years, compared to 13% of borrowers at public colleges.”

Sen. Tom Harkin (D-IA), who chairs the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee, said in a [statement](#) that he had concerns with this proposed rule’s ability to protect students and taxpayers from the negative aspects of for-profit colleges. He said he wanted to see the rule strengthened during the 60-day public comment process.

Congressional Republicans, who generally support for-profit colleges, joined representatives of those institutions in saying the proposal unfairly singled out for-profits and would cause unfair harm to students. Rep. John Kline (R-MN), who chairs the House Education and the Workforce Committee, said in a [statement](#) that at a time of great demand, government should seek to increase education opportunities instead of unjustly penalizing institutions.

The public has 60 days from the release of the proposed rules to provide comment. The department will take that feedback and finalize the rule in the following months.

Administration Proposes Significant Revision to Student Loan Repayment Plans

President Obama’s FY15 budget request proposes a variety of changes to student loan programs that would impact students pursuing professional degrees. While Congress is unlikely to pass the president’s budget, these proposals will almost certainly be discussed in connection with the Higher Education Act reauthorization. The proposals aim to make federal student loan programs more fiscally sustainable and broaden the number of student borrowers enrolled in repayment programs tied to their incomes.

Dental students are among those who currently benefit from income-based repayment (IBR) programs and stand to lose if the proposed changes are adopted. Under the Pay-As-You-Earn (PAYE) program, participants currently repay their student loans at a rate of 10% of their monthly discretionary income, and this is capped at the amount they would be paying under a standard 10-year repayment plan. After 20 years of repayment, any remaining debt is forgiven.

The president’s proposal eliminates the monthly payment cap and extends the repayment period to 25 years for those with federal loan balances in excess of \$30,000 with an overall loan limit of \$138,500 for graduate and professional students. Most dental student borrowers fall in this category, with debt exceeding \$200,000 on average. The proposal makes adjustments to the treatment of taxes and interest related to student loans as well.

HRSA Seeks Comment on Ryan White Dental Reimbursement Program Forms

The Dental Reimbursement Program (DRP) and the Community Based Dental Partnership Program under [Part F](#) of the Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program offer funding to accredited dental education programs to support the provision of oral health services for HIV-positive individuals. Institutions eligible for these Ryan White HIV/AIDS program funds are accredited schools of dentistry, advanced dental education programs and dental hygiene programs. The DRP Application includes the Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program Part F Dental Services Report (DSR), which schools and programs use to apply for funding of non-reimbursed costs incurred in providing oral health care to patients with HIV or to report annual program data.

The DSR collects data in four different areas: program information, patient demographics and services, funding and training. It also requests that applicants provide narrative descriptions of their services and facilities, as well as their links and collaboration with community-based providers of oral health services.

The form used to collect this information is being revised to comply with the National HIV/AIDS Strategy directive to standardize data collection and reduce grantee reporting burden. The revised form implements data collection standards and eliminates some narrative description items; however, the average burden per response is anticipated to remain unchanged.

In January, the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) announced plans to submit an Information Collection Request (ICR) to the Office of Management and Budget ([OMB](#)) to revise the form. Prior to submitting the ICR to OMB, HRSA sought comments from the public regarding the burden estimate of the DSR. As a result, ADEA asked dental education schools and programs for input prior to submitting a formal comment to HRSA. In a [letter](#) dated February 28, Dr. Rick Valachovic, ADEA President and CEO, submitted formal comment on behalf of ADEA members.

In his letter to HRSA on behalf of the ADEA membership, Dr. Valachovic requested significant revision to HRSA's data collection process and suggested ways to enhance the quality, utility and clarity of the information collected. He urged HRSA to implement the recommendations so new institutions are encouraged to participate in the Part F program and so as not to jeopardize the continued involvement of schools that are currently contributing services.

"The Ryan White Part F dental programs are a critical health benefit, and lifeline to adequate oral health services for thousands of adults living with HIV/AIDS," Dr. Valachovic said.

In a letter dated March 12, the HRSA HIV/AIDS Bureau thanked ADEA for its detailed response and agreed with ADEA that the current HRSA HIV/AIDS Bureau estimate of, on average, 20 hours to complete a Ryan White Part F Dental Services Report is wholly inaccurate. Additionally, HRSA noted that it is in the process of revising its forms to standardize data collection and reduce grantee reporting burdens. HRSA also expressed appreciation for several specific recommendations, including automating data collection, assuring platform compatibility and preserving patient confidentiality.

NIH Director Testifies Before House Subcommittee Regarding Biomedical Research

On March 26, Francis S. Collins, M.D., Ph.D., Director of the National Institutes of Health ([NIH](#)), [testified](#) before the Labor-Health and Human Services-Education Appropriation Subcommittee on the future of biomedical research.

Rep. Rosa DeLauro (D-CT), senior Democrat on the subcommittee, stated in her opening remarks that “the work supported by the NIH saved my life, and it has saved the lives of countless others ... I hope this subcommittee will look not just at the budgetary costs of NIH programs, but also at the huge costs to our health, our society, our economy and even to knowledge itself if we fail to invest in health research and disease prevention. ... The simple fact is: the scientific and medical breakthroughs supported by NIH have allowed millions of Americans, myself included, to live happier and healthier lives.”

Dr. Collins provided the subcommittee members with a brief overview of NIH’s past successes and continuing commitment to basic, translational and clinical research. He told the subcommittee members, “Cancer death rates have been dropping about 1% annually for the past 15 years—life expectancy gains that save the nation billions of dollars. HIV/AIDS treatment and prevention now enable us to envision the first AIDS-free generation since this virus emerged more than 30 years ago.”

“NIH has been advancing our understanding of health and disease for more than a century; scientific and technological breakthroughs generated by NIH-supported research are behind much of the gains our country has enjoyed in health and longevity,” said Collins.

AHRQ Funds Projects to Study Proposed Stage 3 Meaningful Use Criteria

The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality ([AHRQ](#)), within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, has awarded a series of grants and contracts to study the feasibility of proposed Stage 3 Meaningful Use criteria. The awards include projects that will examine health information exchange, clinical decision support, care coordination and patient engagement, as well as meaningful use in primary care. Findings will be used to inform final Stage 3 Meaningful Use rule-making. To learn more about the twelve projects that received awards click [here](#).

ADEA/AADR Hill Day on April 8, 2014



The American Dental Education Association/American Association for Dental Research, ADEA/AADR Advocacy Day on Capitol Hill will be held on **April 8, 2014**. The event will take place in the Rayburn House Office Building, Room 2168, from 8:30 a.m. to noon. This one-day event has been designed to provide the dental education and dental and craniofacial research communities an opportunity to advocate before Congress in support of our issues. There will be a short program on issues of importance to academic dentistry, with guest speakers from the academic and dental and craniofacial research community, and greetings from several members of Congress. Immediately following the program, participants will proceed to members’ offices for meetings.

Your participation is invaluable, as an expert in the field of academic dental education and/or dental and craniofacial research, to educate members of Congress. The value of constituents personally interacting with members of Congress cannot be overstated—there is no substitute for direct constituent contact; as we say in Washington, “if you are not at the table—you are on the menu.” Therefore, we trust everyone will make plans to participate in this important event.

Advocacy Day on Capitol Hill is open to all ADEA members. If you cannot attend, please encourage a colleague or students from your institution to attend the event. ADEA will assist in arranging hotel accommodations and provide information regarding congressional members who represent your institution in order to facilitate scheduling meetings—please contact Yvonne Knight, J.D., ADEA Senior Vice President for Advocacy and Governmental Relations at KnightY@adea.org for further information. We look forward to seeing you in Washington.

ADEA AGR Twitter Account

For additional information on issues affecting academic dentistry and dental and craniofacial research in Congress, federal agencies and state legislatures, *please follow ADEA Advocacy and Government Relations on Twitter at [ADEAAGR](#)*, there is much to “tweet” about.

ADEA/Sunstar Americas, Inc./Harry W. Bruce, Jr. Legislative Fellowship

Dental school faculty members or administrators who want to interface with members of Congress on issues of importance to oral health are encouraged to apply for the *ADEA/Sunstar Americas, Inc./Harry W. Bruce, Jr. Legislative Fellowship*. The fellow selected spends three months in Washington, D.C., working on issues and policies that could make a difference in the life of every American.

This public policy fellowship coincides with congressional consideration of the federal budget and other legislative and regulatory activities important to dental education and research. The fellow functions as an ADEA Policy Center staff member who works within the **Advocacy and Governmental Relations** (ADEA AGR) portfolio on ADEA’s specific legislative priorities. The fellow’s responsibilities may include drafting policy, legislative language, position papers and testimony; educating members of Congress and other decision-makers on matters of importance to dental education; and participating in gatherings of various national coalitions. The fellow receives a taxable stipend of \$15,000 to cover travel and expenses for approximately three months (cumulative) in Washington, D.C. (ADEA is flexible in the arrangement of time away from the fellow’s institution.) The fellow’s institution continues to provide salary support for the duration of the experience. Since its inception in 1985, the ADEA/Sunstar Americas, Inc./Harry W. Bruce, Jr. Legislative Fellowship has been generously underwritten by Sunstar Americas, Inc. **Interested candidates should [apply](#) as soon as possible.**

ADEA/Sunstar Americas, Inc./Jack Bresch Student Legislative Internship

The *ADEA/Sunstar Americas, Inc./Jack Bresch Student Legislative Internship* is a six-week, stipend-supported internship in the **Advocacy and Governmental Relations** (ADEA AGR) portfolio of the **ADEA Policy Center** in Washington, D.C. This student legislative internship provides a unique learning experience for predoctoral, allied and advanced dental students, residents and fellows. It is designed to encourage students to learn about and eventually to become involved—as dental professionals—in the federal legislative process and the

formulation of public policy as it relates to academic dentistry. The fellowship is open to any predoctoral, allied or advanced dental student, resident or fellow who is interested in learning about and contributing to the formulation of federal public policy with regard to dental education, dental research and the oral health of the nation. Funded through the generous support of Sunstar Americas, Inc., the student intern will be a member of the ADEA AGR staff and will participate in congressional meetings on Capitol Hill, coalition meetings and policy discussions among the ADEA Legislative Advisory Committee and ADEA AGR staff.

An applicant must be a full-time predoctoral, allied or advanced dental student, resident or fellow whose institution is willing to work with the student to identify an appropriate time, consisting of six weeks during the school year, to pursue the internship. For additional information, please email Yvonne Knight, J.D., ADEA Senior Vice President for Advocacy and Governmental Relations, at KnightY@ADEA.org. Applications are accepted on a year-round basis.

Congressional Resources

For those interested in following the congressional proceedings, please access the U.S. House or Senate by way of the following links:

- U.S. House of Representatives: [House website](#)
- U.S. Senate: [Senate website](#)
- ADEA-AGR Twitter Account: [ADEAAGR](#)

For the latest information on issues affecting dental education and dental and craniofacial research in Washington and the state legislatures, please follow us on Twitter at ADEAAGR. There is much to “tweet” about.

Funding Opportunities

Below are selected funding opportunities that might be of interest. You can search for additional federal government funding opportunities at grants.gov.

PAR-14-143

Establishing Behavioral and Social Measures for Causal Pathway Research in Dental, Oral and Craniofacial Health (R01)

[Grant Information](#)

PAR-14-144

Establishing Behavioral and Social Measures for Causal Pathway Research in Dental, Oral and Craniofacial Health (R21)

[Grant Information](#)

PA-14-042

NIH Pathway to Independence Award (Parent K99/R00)

National Institutes of Health—Department of Health and Human Services

[Grant Information](#)

RFA-HG-14-007

Mentored Career Development Award in Biomedical Big Data Science for Clinicians and Doctorally Prepared Scientists (K01)

[Grant Information](#)

PAR-14-039

Short-term Mentored Career Enhancement Award in Oral, Dental and Craniofacial Research for Mid-Career and Senior Investigators (K18)

National Institutes of Health—Department of Health and Human Services

[Grant Information](#)

PA-14-016

Ruth L. Kirschstein National Research Service Award (NRSA) Short-Term Institutional Research Training Grant (Parent T35)

National Institutes of Health—Department of Health and Human Services

[Grant Information](#)

HRSA-14-135

HIV Early Intervention Services (EIS Program) Service Area Competition-Additional Service Area-Ponce, Puerto Rico

Health Resources and Services Administration—Department of Health and Human Services

[Grant Information](#)

PAR-13-348

NIDCR Small Grant Program for New Investigators (R03)

National Institutes of Health—Department of Health and Human Services

[Grant Information](#)

PA-13-313

Academic Research Enhancement Award (Parents R15)

National Institutes of Health, National Center Institute, National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research—Department of Health and Human Services

[Grant Information](#)

PA-13-347

NIH Support for Conference and Scientific Meetings (Parents R13/U13)

National Institutes of Health, National Center Institute, National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research—Department of Health and Human Services

[Grant Information](#)

PA-13-377

Research on Malignancies in the Context of HIV/AIDS (R01)

National Institutes of Health, National Center Institute, National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research—Department of Health and Human Services

[Grant Information](#)

PA-13-378

Research on Malignancies in the Context of HIV/AIDS (R21)
National Institutes of Health, National Center Institute, National Institute of Dental and
Craniofacial Research—Department of Health and Human Services

[Grant Information](#)

PA-13-303

NIH Exploratory/Developmental Research Grant Program (Parent R21)
National Institutes of Health—Department of Health and Human Services

[Grant Information](#)

Quotable

“Education’s purpose is to replace an empty mind with an open one.”

Malcom Forbes

The *ADEA Washington Update* is published monthly by the ADEA Policy Center when Congress is in session. Its purpose is to keep ADEA members abreast of federal issues and events of interest to the academic dental and research communities.

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