POLICY BEAT
Weekly Digest
December 5th – December 9th, 2011

This Week in Health Policy...

• America’s Health Rankings
• Medicare Seniors Pay Less for Rx
• MLR Final Rule
• Community Health Centers

Office of Health Policy and Government Relations
This week, United Health Foundation, in concert with the American Public Health Association and the Partnership for Prevention, released *America’s Health Rankings*, an annual report that compares key health indicators. More details are available [here](#).

**Highlights:**

- 27.5% of Americans are obese
- 17.3% of Americans are smokers
- USA less healthy than 31 countries
  - Vermont = healthiest state
  - Mississippi = least healthy state
Through the end of October, 2011, Medicare beneficiaries have saved about $1.5 billion in prescription expenses, thanks to the discounts available via the Affordable Care Act (ACA). The savings amount to about $569 per person. As Open Enrollment ends for this year, the evidence is mounting that the ACA is helping to close the “doughnut hole”. More details are available [here](#).
Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) has issued their final rule on the Medical Loss Ratio (MLR), affirming that **insurers will have to spend 80% of the premium dollar on direct medical care for the individual and small group markets, or 85% for large groups.** Insurers are required to give customers a rebate when they do not meet this standard, and report MLR and rebate data to consumers and HHS annually. More details are available [here](#).
The chart below is from the National Association of Community Health Centers (NACHC), and it describes the reduction in funding from multiple states for FY 2012. **This reduction comes on the heels of increased demand for their services, given the increase in uninsured patients because of the recession.** More details [here](#).

Image Credit: National Association of Community Health Centers
What You Can Do

• Please **call your Members of Congress**, and urge them to **preserve funding for Medicare and Medicaid**. Contact info [here](#).

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