

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – April 30, 2010

Media contact: Stephanie Marquis, 360-725-7055

10-015

Washington plans to run its own temporary health insurance program for uninsured

OLYMPIA, Wash. – Insurance Commissioner Mike Kreidler and Gov. Chris Gregoire [have notified Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius](#) that Washington state intends to run its own temporary, federally-funded high risk health insurance program.

“We cannot afford to miss this opportunity to provide much needed coverage to our uninsured,” said Kreidler. “There are many details that need to be worked out, but we plan to leverage the administrative framework and experience of the Washington State Health Insurance Program (WSHIP).”

The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act designated \$5 billion in federal funds to create temporary high risk pool programs to provide health insurance to currently uninsured individuals with preexisting conditions from July 1, 2010 to Jan. 1, 2014. States could either let the federal government run the program or contract with the federal government to set up the high risk pools through state programs or private non-profit entities.

“Signaling our intent to run the new program ourselves is the first step in the process,” said Kreidler. “We expect to receive more details before formal applications are due at the end of May.”

Under the new law, there are specific requirements for the high risk pools regarding eligibility, benefits, and funding. For instance, participants must:

- be a citizen or national of the U.S. or lawfully reside in the U.S.,
- must have been uninsured for at least six months,
- and must have a preexisting health condition.

“Many of the details regarding benefits still need to be determined, but once the formal application has been made we intend to hold a public meeting to share information about the new program,” added Kreidler.

Stephanie Marquis
Public Affairs
Office of the Insurance Commissioner

Work: 360.725.7051 | Email: Stephaniem@oic.wa.gov | www.insurance.wa.gov | <http://wainsurance.blogspot.com/>