

Washington, D.C. - Health insurance reform legislation, which was signed into law in March, includes provisions allowing parents to carry their children on their insurance until their 26th birthday, effective September 23, 2010. Today, Rep. David Price (D-NC), a supporter of the reform legislation, applauded Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius for HHS's outreach to health insurers, which led several—including UnitedHealthcare and Blue Cross Blue Shield—to initiate early implementation of the new law. The provision's effective date was problematic for graduating college seniors and students turning 21 before September 23rd. Early implementation will allow parents to continue covering their children and avoid a gap in coverage.

"I applaud Secretary Sebelius reaching out to private insurers, and the insurers themselves for implementing one of health insurance reform's central benefits for families and young adults early," Rep. Price said. "Their proactive efforts will help ensure that graduating college seniors and students turning 21 before September can maintain their health insurance and avoid a gap in coverage."

The change follows an April 19, 2010 letter from Secretary Sebelius to private insurers urging them to implement the change. In her letter to insurers, Secretary Sebelius wrote:

"Enabling young adults to remain on their parents' policies between May, 2010 and the new plan year beginning on or after September 23, 2010, rather than dis-enrolling them in May and then re-enrolling them in six or more months, has substantial benefits for all involved. The action would enable young, overwhelmingly healthy people, who will not engender large health care costs, to stay in the insurance pool and retain important insurance coverage. Taking this step will also save money for your companies by avoiding the administrative costs of dis-enrolling and then re-enrolling young adults. . . Taking this step is good business and will offer relief to grateful families across the country."

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