

# Delaware to Participate in NGA's Bipartisan Health Reform Learning Network

*Initiative will help states anticipate effects of federal health care changes, and discuss new ways to reduce costs*

**WILMINGTON, Del.** – Governor John Carney announced on Thursday that Delaware has been selected as one of 14 states to participate in the Governors' Bipartisan Health Reform Learning Network – an initiative led by the National Governors Association. The network will help Delaware anticipate potential federal health care changes under consideration in Congress, and discuss new ways of using innovation to reduce the growth in health care spending.

Governor Carney has expressed concern over efforts in Washington to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act, saying proposed changes could limit access to quality health care for Delawareans with the greatest needs, and shift health care costs onto the states.

“I believe that the technical assistance provided through this opportunity will make a significant difference in our efforts to curb the growth of health care spending in Delaware and to prepare for the statutory and regulatory parameters of any new Medicaid or private health insurance reforms that may be enacted in Washington,” said **Governor Carney**. “The work of our Delaware team will have a direct impact on the lives of all Delawareans, including state employees and retirees, those who are covered by Medicaid, and individuals and families who depend on the benefits of the Affordable Care Act for quality health care.”

Strategically realigning resources to drive statewide health care innovation, improve health outcomes, and lower costs was

a recommendation of the [Action Plan for Delaware](#).

The Governors' Bipartisan Health Reform Learning Network – which is designed to assist states in navigating the changing health care landscape – will include Delaware, California, Kentucky, Maryland, Minnesota, Montana, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Tennessee, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Washington and Wyoming.

Delaware and the other states will:

- Receive clear, unbiased information on the potential impact of proposed changes to Medicaid and private health insurance;
- Engage in a dialogue with other state leaders and national experts about reform proposals, including targets for health care spending, and their potential impact on states;
- Receive data analyses regarding the state impact of health care reforms; and
- Receive technical assistance to understand and prepare for the statutory and regulatory parameters of any new Medicaid and private health insurance reforms, if enacted.

Delaware also will join six other states – Minnesota, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Utah, Vermont and Virginia – in a complementary Maternal and Child Health working group charged with evaluating proposed changes and informing the learning network about potential implications.

The members of Delaware's Health Reform Learning Network team are:

- Dr. Kara Odom Walker, Secretary of the Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS);
- Molly Magarik, Deputy Secretary for DHSS;
- Chris Hudson, Director of Budget Development, Planning and Administration with the Office of Management and

Budget;

- Regina Mitchell, Fiscal and Policy Analyst with the Office of Management and Budget;
- Dr. Karyl Rattay, Director of DHSS' Division of Public Health;
- Stephen Groff, Director of DHSS' Division of Medicaid and Medical Assistance;
- Laura Howard, Executive Director of the Health Care Commission; and
- Sheila Grant, Deputy Chief of Staff for Governor Carney.

The members of Delaware's Maternal and Child Health working group include:

- Leah Jones Woodall, Section Chief for Family Health Systems, federally designated Maternal and Child Health Director in DHSS' Division of Public Health;
- Kate Tullis, PhD., Director of Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs in DHSS' Division of Public Health;
- Dr. Karyl Rattay, Director of DHSS' Division of Public Health; and
- Stephen Groff, Director of DHSS' Division of Medicaid and Medical Assistance.

Secretary Walker, a board-certified family physician, said Delaware's acceptance into the learning network will help to further the health care innovation under way at DHSS and through the Delaware Center for Health Innovation (DCHI).

"We are at a critical stage in our health care delivery transformation," said **Secretary Walker**. "As participants in the Governors' Bipartisan Health Reform Learning Network, we will be able to tap into some of the best ideas and innovations in the country, including global spending targets to curb the growth of health care spending, and bring them to our state. We believe that will lead us to additional ways to improve the health of Delawareans and their experience with

the health care system, while reducing the overall costs.”

Delaware already is taking steps to drive health care innovation, improve health care outcomes, and lower costs.

In 2015, Delaware was selected to receive a four-year, \$35 million grant from the federal Center for Medicare and Medicaid Innovation to implement initiatives that are focused on helping Delaware achieve the Triple Aim Plus One: better health, improved health care quality and patient experience, lower growth in per capita health care costs, and an enhanced provider experience that promotes patient-centered engagement.

The goal of the innovation work is to strengthen the primary care system so that patients experience well-coordinated, team-based care that delivers better health outcomes, to align incentives for providers and health insurers to focus on quality and affordability, to support patients to engage in their own health, and to support communities to work together to promote health and connect community resources to the health care system.

Delaware’s accomplishments to date from the grant include the statewide launch of a Common Provider Scorecard with health measures aligned with major payers, more than 350 primary care providers receiving grant-funded training and technical assistance in transforming their practices to better meet all of the needs of their patients, financial assistance to six behavioral health practices that include 68 providers to support adoption of electronic medical records, more than 30 percent adoption of value-based payment models by providers statewide, the launch of a community-based population health initiative in two areas of the state, and the passage of legislation enabling the Delaware Health Care Claims Database.

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