



Office of Public and Private Initiatives

The Office of Public and Private Initiatives is responsible for policy and research activities within the Colorado Department of Health Care Policy and Financing, an executive agency of the state government. The role of the Office is to develop partnerships with the private sector and to use the state's leverage as a large purchaser of health care to improve the quality, reduce the cost, and increase the accessibility of health care.

The work of the Office is funded by a combination of state general fund dollars and a Robert Wood Johnson Foundation grant. The Office's activities focus on the development, implementation, and evaluation of incremental reform measures. Reforms will be developed and implemented in close collaboration with business leaders, consumer groups, and the health care community.

The Office's first priority is implementation of health reform bills that passed in 1994. House Bill 94-1210 included guaranteed issue, portability, risk adjustment, and a phase-in of adjusted community rating. House Bill 94-1193 allowed for the creation of voluntary, private insurance purchasing cooperatives. Additional health alliance and market reform projects include: the provision of technical assistance to health care coverage cooperatives; the provision of technical assistance to the Commissioner of Insurance in developing a risk adjustment methodology for the small group market; and the examination of consolidated or coordinated health insurance purchasing for public employees.

The Office's second main activity is the health plan accountability project which is designed to encourage competition based on quality as well as on price. This involves building community consensus on appropriate quality standards, monitoring systems, and consumer information systems for the health care market; implementation of an accountability program to manage Medicaid capitated health plan contracts; and the provision of technical assistance to providers that traditionally serve populations with special needs as they attempt to contract with commercial health insurers. This last project will focus, in particular, on school-based health care providers. The health information systems portion of the project is especially critical now that the Colorado Health Data Commission has been discontinued.

The Office's third activity is consensus-building around a market-based proposal to decrease the number of uninsured. There are currently 560,000 uninsured individuals in Colorado, many of them employed or the dependents of employed persons. Due to the decline in employer-based coverage, it has become important for the state to explore other options for providing coverage to these individuals. This project will probably target coverage for children, pregnant women, or low-income working families.

For further information about the Office of Public and Private Initiatives or for a list of Office publications, please write or call **The Department of Health Care Policy and Financing, Office of Public and Private Initiatives, 1575 Sherman Street, 4th floor, Denver, CO 80203, 303/866-3327.**