

# STATES EXPANDING MEDICAID: IMPLICATIONS FOR THE HCH COMMUNITY

## Frontline Staff Frequently Asked Questions

MAY 2014

The Affordable Care Act (ACA) is driving a number of changes to the health care system, and Health Care for the Homeless (HCH) frontline staff play a vital role in helping ensure ongoing services for those experiencing homelessness during this time of change and uncertainty. In states expanding Medicaid to non-disabled adults who earn at or below 138% of the federal poverty level (about \$16,000 for an individual), HCH's are well-suited to provide education, services and assistance in accessing both health insurance and medical care.

### What does the ACA (“Obamacare”) really do for our clients?

- Improves access to health care by expanding new insurance options, increasing service locations & bolstering the number of providers
- Provides protections against health insurance abuses
- Reduces health disparities, increase care coordination & improve access to data

### What is the role of HCH?

- Continue providing high-quality health care services to people experiencing homelessness, regardless of their insurance status
- Enroll clients in health insurance plans (most likely Medicaid) and connect them to health care
- Help clients navigate a sometimes uncertain or imperfect system, as HCH has always done

### What changes can I expect in the short term?

- New training opportunities to assist individuals with enrollment in Medicaid (or other insurance)
- New staff positions that focus on outreach and enrollment
- The ability to connect clients to a wider range of health services, like specialty care
- Assessments for new patient capacity and the ability to see more clients
- New partnerships with other health and housing providers

### What changes can I expect in the long term?

- More revenue for your organization through increased billing
- Better access to a broader range of care, improved health, and fewer unmet treatment needs
- Fewer individuals becoming homeless due to health problems

### Where can I get assistance or more information?

- Local call centers and dedicated professionals can assist with ACA enrollment
- Your project's leadership will have the latest developments in your area (ask them about it!)
- Government websites: [www.healthcare.gov](http://www.healthcare.gov) or your state's health reform site
- National HCH Council: <http://www.nhchc.org/policy-advocacy/reform/nhchc-health-reform-materials/>
- Your state's Primary Care Association

**Make sure you are involved!** Each state has different plans, goals and objectives. Make sure your agency is involved in the planning in order to meet the needs of your clients.