



Tom Barrett
Mayor

Bevan K. Baker, FACHE
Commissioner of Health

Anna C. Benton, MA
Interim Health Operations Administrator

www.milwaukee.gov/health

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Media Contact: Brandy Gillery
414- 286-3970 (business hours)
Anna Benton
414-397-1620 (after hours)

Supreme Court Decision to Uphold the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act

As Health Commissioner for the City of Milwaukee, I am very pleased that the Supreme Court has upheld the major components of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act. This historic decision reaffirms the American values of community and equal opportunity for all.

Not only will this decision ensure that all people have access to affordable private insurance or Medicaid, it also provides increased access to prevention and wellness services at no cost to patients, regardless of income. Preventing chronic diseases such as diabetes, heart disease, and cancer will help decrease health care costs while simultaneously increasing overall population health.

Prevention of chronic disease and access to health care across the lifespan is a crucial investment in our future. It ensures a healthier and more productive workforce; keeps children healthy so they can stay in school, learn well, and graduate ready for work; and assists struggling families with the ability to pay for health insurance while reducing the number one cause of personal bankruptcy in the US, which is the inability to pay for needed healthcare.

In addition, the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act guarantees access to important women's health services, such as routine mammograms, PAP smears, and access to contraception. We know that preventing unplanned and unwanted pregnancies through safe and effective contraception will improve birth outcomes, lower the infant mortality rate, and reduce the teen pregnancy rate. Reduced teen pregnancy rates will result in improved overall educational outcomes and reduced poverty, which in turn support a healthier and more productive workforce.

The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act provides health benefits for people in every age group, and the importance of increasing health insurance coverage for young adults and for children with pre-existing conditions – as well as for reducing the risk of seniors falling into the “donut hole” related to the high cost prescription drugs – cannot be overstated.

I applaud the Supreme Court for upholding this historic legislation, and I call on Governor Walker, Secretary of Health Services Dennis Smith, and Attorney General J.B. Van Hollen to uphold and implement the Affordable Care Act to its fullest extent for the benefit of all residents of Milwaukee, and Wisconsin.

Think Health. Act Now!