

Quick Facts about Health Care Reform

The Affordable Health Care for America Act of 2010, widely referred to as Health Care Reform, raises the Medicaid eligibility threshold to 133% of the federally defined poverty level. Additionally, it requires that adults without dependent children be eligible for Medicaid.

In short, with more people now able to receive coverage, there will be more patients for all health professionals, including substance abuse counselors.

- 32 million people will be eligible for new coverage by 2014.
- Of the newly covered Americans, up to one-third – or 10 million – will require care for substance abuse disorders or mental health services. Not all will seek it out, but they're in need.
- By 2014:
 - 6.3 million individuals, newly covered by Medicaid, will be in need of behavioral health services.
 - 4.2 million individuals, newly covered by private insurance, will be in need of behavioral health services.
 - \$30 billion in Medicaid funding is allocated annually for substance abuse services.
 - \$7 billion annually is spent on private health care contributions for substance abuse services.

There are several provisions that impact the workforce as well:

- Contrary to rumor, there is no requirement in the Affordable Care Act that a substance abuse counselor holds a master's degree.
- Substance abuse counselors who pursue graduate and postgraduate degrees will be eligible for loan repayment, if they choose to work in underserved areas.
- Only the states will be able to determine which professionals can be reimbursed for specific treatment and prevention services.
- The act does offer incentive to integrate services, so collaborating with primary care providers will be pivotal.