

Washington, DC – Congressman Sam Farr (D-Carmel) and Central Coast health care leaders mark the 2nd Anniversary of the Affordable Care Act, and recognize the benefits the law has already delivered to thousands on the Central Coast. On March 23, 2010, Congress passed and President Obama signed into law historic health care reform legislation: the Affordable Care Act.

At the two-year anniversary of this landmark law, new data demonstrates the benefits that the law has already provided to seniors, young adults, small businesses, and many others on the Central Coast. As a result of the law (data provided by the House Committee on Energy and Commerce):

- **7,400 young adults** in the district now have health insurance.
- **4,900 seniors** in the district received prescription drug discounts worth **\$3.2 million**, an average discount of \$650 per senior.

- **53,000 seniors** in the district received Medicare preventive services without paying any co-pays, coinsurance, or deductibles.
- **27,000 children and 110,000 adults** now have health insurance that covers preventive services without paying any co-pays, coinsurance, or deductibles.

- **460 small businesses** in the district received tax credits to help maintain or expand health care coverage for their employees.
- **9,000 to 40,000 children** with preexisting health conditions can no longer be denied coverage by health insurers.

“After only two years since its passage the Affordable Care Act has already extended quality health care to thousands of families, seniors and young adults on the Central Coast,” **said**

Congressman Farr

. “Preexisting conditions are no longer an excuse to be denied coverage and life saving preventive care is now offered at no cost. These are some of the impacts of health care reform that are fundamentally changing our health care system by increasing access to care while reducing costs.”

“Thanks to Health Care Reform, right now in Santa Cruz County, we have over a thousand people who now have health insurance under the Low Income Health Program (LIHP),” **said Giang T. Nguyen, RN, MSN, Director, Santa Cruz County Health Services Agency**

. “The LIHP is one of the federal’s approved “Bridge to Reform” Health Demonstration Projects for California. This program provides much needed integrated physical health and behavioral health services to those who have been underserved and have been doing without health insurance for so long. Our ability to provide them with a designated medical home and providers, prescription medications and specialty services is changing the quality of these people's lives. Ask any one of them if healthcare reform is important for their lives.”

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“Just as they have since we opened our doors in 1974, Santa Cruz Women’s Health Center patients turn to us in a personal hour of need,” **Leslie Conner, Executive Director at the Santa Cruz Women’s Health Center** . “They – or their children - may be sick. They may have been battered. They may be emotionally overwhelmed — or, too often, all of the above. Our commitment is constant for each of them: to provide the care they seek with dignity, compassion, and unwavering respect for their needs and values. This is at the heart of the relationship between a patient and her provider. Our ideal — what we have fought for as advocates and within our clinic walls— is that the interactions between patients and providers are driven by the best of what science, medicine, and human compassion dictate, and that these interactions build trust and relationships between patients and their providers. Ongoing access to a trusted primary care provider is essential if women are to receive the screenings and treatments that are right for them. The Affordable Care Act opens the door to such care for thousands of local women and their families. It is literally the key to the doctor-patient relationship that is at the heart of quality health care and prevention.”

“This is definitely a great moment in the history of health care for our nation,” **Maximiliano Cuevas, MD, Chief Executive Officer of Clinica de Salud del Valle de Salinas**

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Not since the creation of the Medicaid and Medicare programs almost fifty years ago, have we seen such fundamental change in how families access our health care delivery system. Now, even more families will be able to access our reformed delivery system to get the health care services that they need.”

“It is unbelievable that we are celebrating the second year anniversary of the passing of the Affordable Care Act—a dream come true which only true visionaries would hope for,” **said Rosa Vivian Fernandez, President CEO of the San Benito Health Foundation**

“Much like the passing of Medicare we still need to adjust to our new environment and while not perfect or fully implemented it has certainly had a positive impact. No longer should insured individuals forgo important preventive health screenings and secondary prevention such as immunizations which can keep us healthy and prevent higher cost medical services that can excel late health care cost and result on disability or early death. We look forward to the coming years in which innovation and increased access to insurance coverage for all Americans for a decreased cost of health care delivery and improved health outcomes will result. Patience, Innovation and entrepreneurial efforts will make our efforts truly effective and lasting.”

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