



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR NANCY WYMAN

September 16, 2011

**MALLOY/WYMAN ADMINISTRATION ANNOUNCES
FEDERAL GRANT TO AID SMOKING CESSATION**

iQuit Program Aims to Improve Health, Reduce Medicaid Costs

HARTFORD – The administration of Gov. Dannel P. Malloy and Lt. Gov. Nancy Wyman today announced that Connecticut has been selected to receive a five-year federal grant of up to \$10 million to improve residents’ health and lower taxpayer’s costs by helping Medicaid patients to quit smoking.

The grant to help launch the **iQuit** program stems from Connecticut’s application for funding under the Medicaid Incentives for Prevention of Chronic Diseases grant program.

“This innovative program is encouraging Connecticut and other states to try new approaches to fight chronic diseases that destroy people’s health and cost taxpayers millions of dollars,” Wyman said. “By using new methods to encourage Medicaid participants to quit smoking, we can make real improvements in their health and help the state’s fiscal bottom line.”

Wyman and Jeannette DeJesús, the Governor’s special advisor on health reform, commended the Department of Social Services (DSS) for preparing the successful grant application to the U.S. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. Yale University School of Medicine, the Hartford-based Hispanic Health Council, and the state Department of Public Health helped prepare the application and will be partners in the program.

“As Connecticut’s Medicaid agency, DSS administers health coverage for about 550,000 low-income residents of all ages,” DeJesús said. “DSS is also responsible for the largest state budget area with Medicaid – \$4.6 billion – and understands that cost mitigation as well as public health improvements are important goals as we move forward with health reform initiatives in Connecticut.”

DSS Commissioner Roderick L. Bremby said the **iQuit** program aims to reduce smoking rates among the 25%-to-30% of state Medicaid beneficiaries who currently use tobacco.

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“Pregnant women, mothers of newborns, and individuals with mental illness will be a special focus of the program,” Bremby said. “The timing is especially good because we are getting close to the January 1 start of smoking cessation services as a covered benefit in Connecticut’s Medicaid program.”

The **iQuit** program will encourage both smokers and medical providers to participate in counseling and training sessions, peer coaching and other smoking-cessation techniques. Financial incentives are used to encourage smokers to attend these sessions and to achieve objective, verifiable goals in reducing tobacco use.

The program will also coordinate with the state’s restructured health care delivery system. On January 1, 2012, DSS will move from a managed-care system to an ‘administrative services organization’ structure, which emphasizes a person-centered, medical home model of care.

“By delivering incentives within person-centered medical homes, obstetrics practices and local mental health authorities, we will leverage important changes in health care delivery under the Affordable Care Act,” said a project summary written by the grant application’s author, DSS Medical Care Administration Director Mark Schaefer.

“We applaud your commitment to test and evaluate the effectiveness of a program to provide financial and non-financial incentives to Medicaid beneficiaries of all ages who participate in prevention programs and demonstrate changes in health risks and outcomes, including the adoption of healthy behaviors,” wrote Richard J. Gilfillan, M.D., acting director of the Center for Medicare & Medicaid Innovation, in the grant award letter to Connecticut.

In October 2010, Connecticut began providing smoking cessation coverage for pregnant women in Medicaid, as required under federal health care reform, but smoking cessation services did not extend to other Medicaid recipients. Gov. Malloy’s February 2011 budget expanded smoking cessation beyond the Affordable Care Act requirement to include other Medicaid beneficiaries, and the measure was approved by the General Assembly.

The initial federal award of \$730,578 covers September 13, 2011, through September, 13, 2012. The total funding amount over five years is expected to be up to \$10 million.

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