

Three bright green apples are arranged on a white background. One apple is in the foreground, slightly to the right, and is the largest. Two other apples are behind it, one to the left and one to the right. The apples are fresh and have a slight sheen. The text 'Massachusetts Health Reform' is overlaid in white with a black outline across the middle of the image.

Massachusetts Health Reform

Brian Rosman, Health Care For All
April 2007

Health Care For All: Who We Are

- We Organize and Lead Health Policy Coalitions
 - Affordable Care Today (ACT!!)
 - Racial & Ethnic Health Disparities Action Network (DAN)
 - Oral Health Advocacy Task Force
 - Consumer Quality Coalition
 - Private Market Consumer Network
 - Children's Health Access Coalition (CHAC)
- We Help Consumers Directly
 - Consumer Helpline (telephone/email), Outreach & Enrollment, Health Law Advocates
- We Communicate to Inform Everyone
 - www.hcfama.org, email updates, Blog (blog.hcfama.org)



Brief History of Reform in Mass

- 1988 - Ch. 23: Universal Health Care Law
 - Pay/Play Employer Mandate
 - Never Implemented/Repealed 1996
 - CommonHealth (working disabled), Student Mandate, Medical Security Plan (unemployment), Healthy Start (pregnant women) – still going strong
- 1996 - Ch. 203: MassHealth
 - Medicaid->MassHealth; Income-based not welfare-based
 - Coverage for all children
 - Senior Pharmacy Program
- Both reform waves inspired national action



April 12, 2006: Chapter 58



April 12, 2006: Chapter 58

- Governor, House and Senate materials:

www.hcfama.org/act

“From Proposal to Law” link



Goal: Expand Coverage

How We Get There:

- Medicaid (MassHealth) expansions
- Subsidized coverage for low income adults
- Changes to insurance market to help individuals and small businesses
- Shared Responsibility:
 - Government
 - Individuals
 - Employers



Government Responsibility: Medicaid Expansions & Restorations

- MassHealth:
 - Expanded eligibility for children
 - Enrollment caps lifted
 - Benefits Restored: dental and eyeglasses
 - Progress: Over 50,000 new enrollees since July – half kids, half adults
 - Info:
 - [Mass.gov/masshealth](http://mass.gov/masshealth)
 - Mass Law Reform Institute:
<http://masslegalservices.org/cat/40>



"Connector"



- Commonwealth Health Insurance Connector Authority
- 10 members:
 - 3 administration officials
 - 3 Gov appointees (business, actuary, economist)
 - 3 AG appointees (labor, consumer, benefits expert)
 - State workers health program director
- Directs most, but not all health reform programs



Connector Info



- Official Web site:
www.mass.gov/connector
- Consumer / biz web sites :
www.mahealthconnector.org
www.gethealthcoverage.net
- Board meeting reports:
blog.hcfama.org



Government Responsibility: Commonwealth Care

- Subsidized coverage for uninsured adults below 300% fpl
 - Private Coverage – with similar enrollment process to Medicaid
- Created, subsidized and offered by Health Insurance Connector
- Goal is to enroll 140,000
- Approx. 63,000 enrolled so far
- www.macommonwealthcare.com



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**Need help?
Call us.**

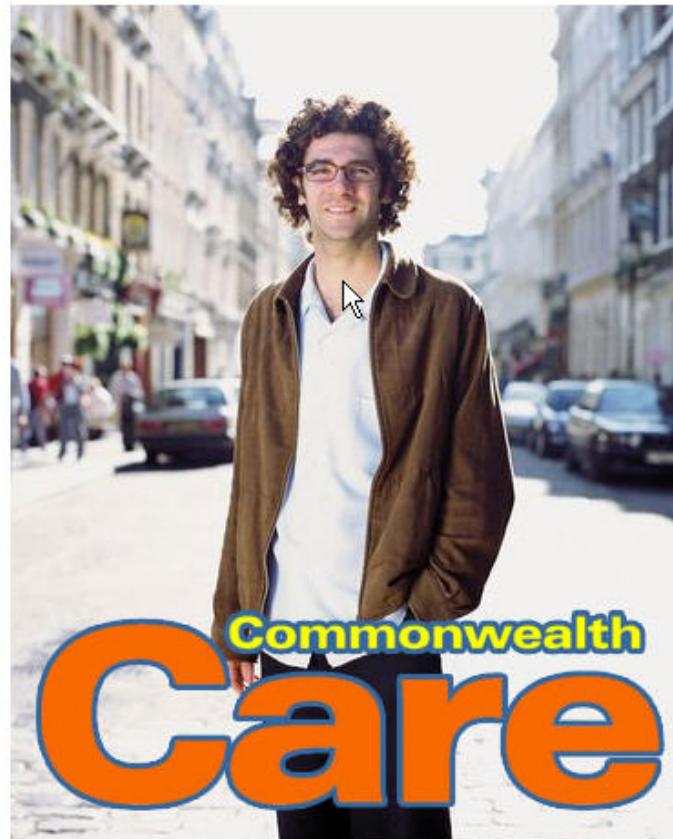


1-877-MA-ENROLL

Welcome to Commonwealth Care

The Commonwealth Care Health Insurance Program (Commonwealth Care) is a program run by the Commonwealth Health Insurance Connector. This program connects qualified Massachusetts residents with affordable health insurance if they do not have it.

Commonwealth Care provides health insurance coverage that meets many health care needs, including doctor office visits, inpatient hospital care, pharmacy benefits, mental health and substance abuse services, and more.



Need Help?

- ◆ Want to find out if you are **Eligible for Commonwealth Care benefits?** [Click here.](#)
- ◆ If you are already eligible for benefits, [Register](#) for online services and [Enroll Now.](#)
- ◆ Forgot your password? [Click here](#) for help.
- ◆ Call our friendly customer service agents if you have any questions:
1-877-MA-ENROLL

Getting Started

[REGISTER](#)

[TAKE CUSTOMER SURVEY](#)

Provider Lookup

First Name

Last Name

Zip Code

[SEARCH](#)



Chapter 58– Insurance Market

“Commonwealth Choice”

- Plans for individuals and small business
- 3 levels: high, mid and “minimum creditable coverage”
- Sign-up starts May 1, coverage July 1



Chapter 58– Insurance Market

Insurance Market Reforms

- Non-group (individuals) health insurance market merges into small group market
 - Could cut non-group premiums 15%
- 19-26 year olds can stay on parents' plans for 2 years
- Special reduced-benefit plans available for 19-26 year olds
- Effective July 1



Individual Responsibility

- Individual Mandate
 - All residents 18+ must obtain health insurance coverage
 - **If “affordable”**
 - Coverage must meet Minimum Creditable Coverage standards
 - Effective 7/1/07; Enforced as of 12/31/07
 - Tax Penalties
 - 2007: loss of personal tax exemption
 - 2008+: half of cost of affordable plan (enforced month-by-month)
 - 63 day grace period
 - “Compassionate” waiver process



Individual Responsibility

- Draft Affordability Standards approved
 - If eligible for Commonwealth Care, must enroll
 - Commonwealth Care premiums are standard if not eligible
 - Sliding scale above 300% fpl
 - Young people must buy; older may be excused
- Hearings in May, final regulations in June



Employer Responsibility

- Fair Share Contribution
 - Employers with 11 or more employees must offer “fair and reasonable” coverage
 - “Fair and reasonable” = pay 25% of premium or cover 33% of full-time workers
 - Any coverage (no MCC requirement)
 - If don't, must pay up to \$295 per worker
 - Defined by Division of Health Care Finance and Policy:

www.mass.gov/dhcfp



Employer Responsibility- 2

- "Section 125" – pre-tax payroll deductions
 - Employers with 11 or more employees must facilitate pre-tax purchase of insurance
 - If don't and employee needs free care, *can* be charged for *some portion* of use – "free rider surcharge"
- "Minimum Creditable Coverage"
- Health Insurance Responsibility Disclosure – form for employees and employers



Employer Responsibility- 3

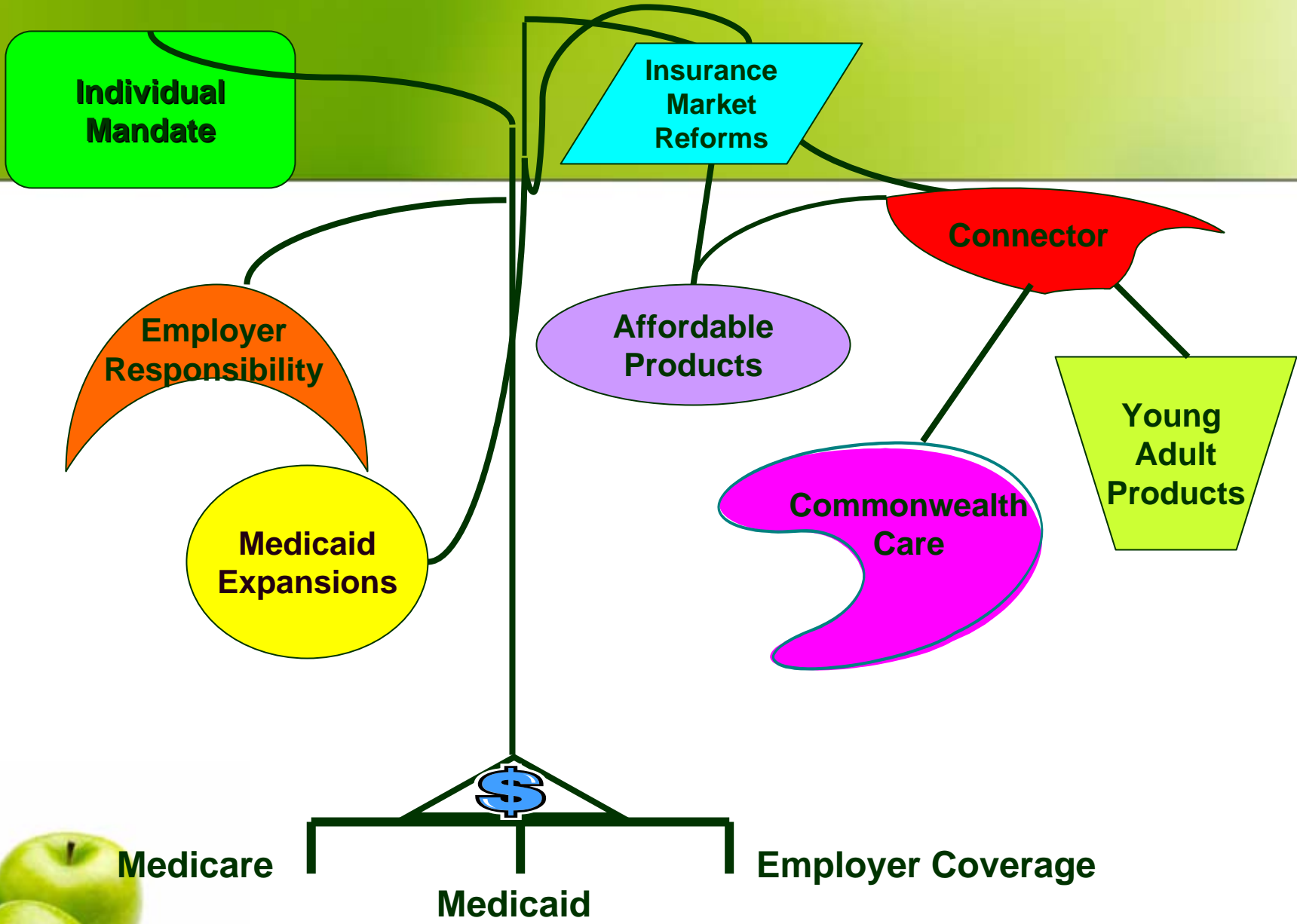
- "1099 – HC"
 - Tax statement used to determine compliance with individual mandate
 - Employer equal contribution requirement
 - Info sources:
 - Connector – employer handbook
 - Law firms / HR consultants
- Littler.com >ASAPs > East Coast > article by Rep. Walz



Chap. 58: Quality and Cost, Disparities Councils

- Quality and Cost Council
 - Sets standards, informs public on quality and cost issues
- Public Health initiatives
- Disparities Council
 - Permanent voice to recommend policies on health disparities





**Individual
Mandate**

**Insurance
Market
Reforms**

**Employer
Responsibility**

**Medicaid
Expansions**

**Affordable
Products**

Connector

**Commonwealth
Care**

**Young
Adult
Products**

Medicare

Medicaid

Employer Coverage



More information ...

- blog.hcfama.org – latest news and rumors
- www.hcfama.org/act – bill text, summaries, analysis,
- *Health Access Update* – email list with updates on reform implementation. Sign up at www.hcfama.org

