



For Immediate Release
March 24, 2011

Contact: Jodi Mitchell, KVH Executive Director
502-552-1406, KVHexec@kyvoicesforhealth.org

PROTECTING WOMEN'S HEALTH CARE
Statement of Kentucky Voices for Health
on the First Anniversary of the Affordable Care Act

March 23 marks the one-year anniversary of the Affordable Care Act being signed into law. Now that health reform is the law of the land, Kentucky Voices for Health believes it is time to move forward to protect women's health care.

Moving forward means a woman cannot be charged more for health insurance just because of her gender. Moving forward means no longer branding a woman as having a pre-existing condition because she has had a Caesarean section or was a victim of domestic violence. It means insurance for women can no longer be cancelled because they get sick, that their children can no longer be denied care because of pre-existing conditions, and that women and their families can receive preventive health care without a co-pay. It's time we all move forward. Women and their families cannot afford to go back.

The Affordable Care Act protects women's health in a number of important ways:

- **The Affordable Care Act ends discriminatory practices against women.** Health insurers will no longer be able to charge women higher premiums than men. And it means they will no longer be able to use Caesarean sections or domestic violence as pre-existing conditions to deny women health care. Insurers will also no longer be able to drop women's coverage if they get sick.
- **The Affordable Care Act provides security for essential health care.** Under the law, all new health plans will be required to offer essential benefits for women such as maternity care, newborn care and prescription drug benefits. According to the National Women Law Center, only 13% of health plans in the individual market include maternity care.
- **The Affordable Care Act ends co-pays for important preventive services.** Americans joining a new health plan or Medicare beneficiaries can receive recommended preventive services without a co-pay, deductible or any other out-of-pocket expenses. This provision helps women because it will cover such services as mammograms, new baby care and well-child visits.
- **The Affordable Care Act allows women to choose their own doctor.** The new law guarantees women the right to choose their primary care doctor from their health

provider network. It also eliminates barriers for women to see OB-GYNs. Under the law, health plans can no longer require a referral from a primary physician to see an OB-GYN. Now, women have more control over these important health decisions.

- **The Affordable Care Act ends lifetime limits on health coverage.** The Affordable Care Act bans insurance companies from imposing lifetime caps on health coverage. It also restricts annual limits and will ban them entirely in 2014. This means women will be able to get the care they need when they need it most.

Detailed information about the Affordable Care Act and its impact on Kentucky is also available in *The New Health Reform Law: What It Means for Kentuckians*, an issue brief prepared by Kentucky Voices for Health that can be downloaded at <http://kyvoicesforhealth.com/reform.html>. The brief was produced to help Kentuckians understand the health reform law. It includes a basic timeline of what will happen when under the new law, frequently asked questions and resources for further information

Kentucky Voices for Health seeks to work with communities and organization partners to broaden awareness of health care issues. KVH maintains a speakers' bureau of coalition members available to attend meetings and events to provide information about KVH's priorities as well as the provisions of the Affordable Care Act. A speakers' bureau request form can be accessed from <http://kyvoicesforhealth.com/speakersbureau.html>.

Kentucky Voices for Health is a broad coalition of nearly 100 organizations working to improve Kentuckians' health and health care coverage. The coalition's leadership team is composed of representatives from AARP Kentucky, Advocacy Action Network, American Cancer Society, American Heart Association, American Lung Association, Catholic Conference of Kentucky, Covering Kentucky Kids and Families, Kentucky Council of Churches, Kentucky Equal Justice Center, the Kentucky Injury Prevention and Research Center, and Kentucky Youth Advocates. Kentucky Voices for Health receives grant funding from the Public Welfare Foundation through the Foundation for a Healthy Kentucky.

Kentucky Voices for Health: Building a healthy Kentucky together.

We're a coalition of concerned Kentuckians who believe that the best health care solutions are found when everyone works together to build them. Right now, families and businesses in every county are facing rising costs, and too many of us go without needed health care. Healthy families create healthy economies. And a healthy Kentucky economy is something we all want. So we're working step by step to build a healthier Kentucky for our families, our children and our grandchildren.