

# Efforts to Address Equity in State Health Care Reform

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*Cultivating Traditions of Wellness*

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# About Families USA

- National, nonprofit policy & advocacy organization
- Mission: the achievement of high-quality, affordable health care for all
- Vision: the expansion of public programs, i.e. Medicaid, SCHIP, and Medicare

# About Minority Health Initiatives

- Issue areas disproportionately affect communities of color
- Systematic way to address these issues
- Activities include:
  - Analysis of how policies and programs affect racial and ethnic minorities
  - Community leader trainings
  - Information dissemination and technical assistance

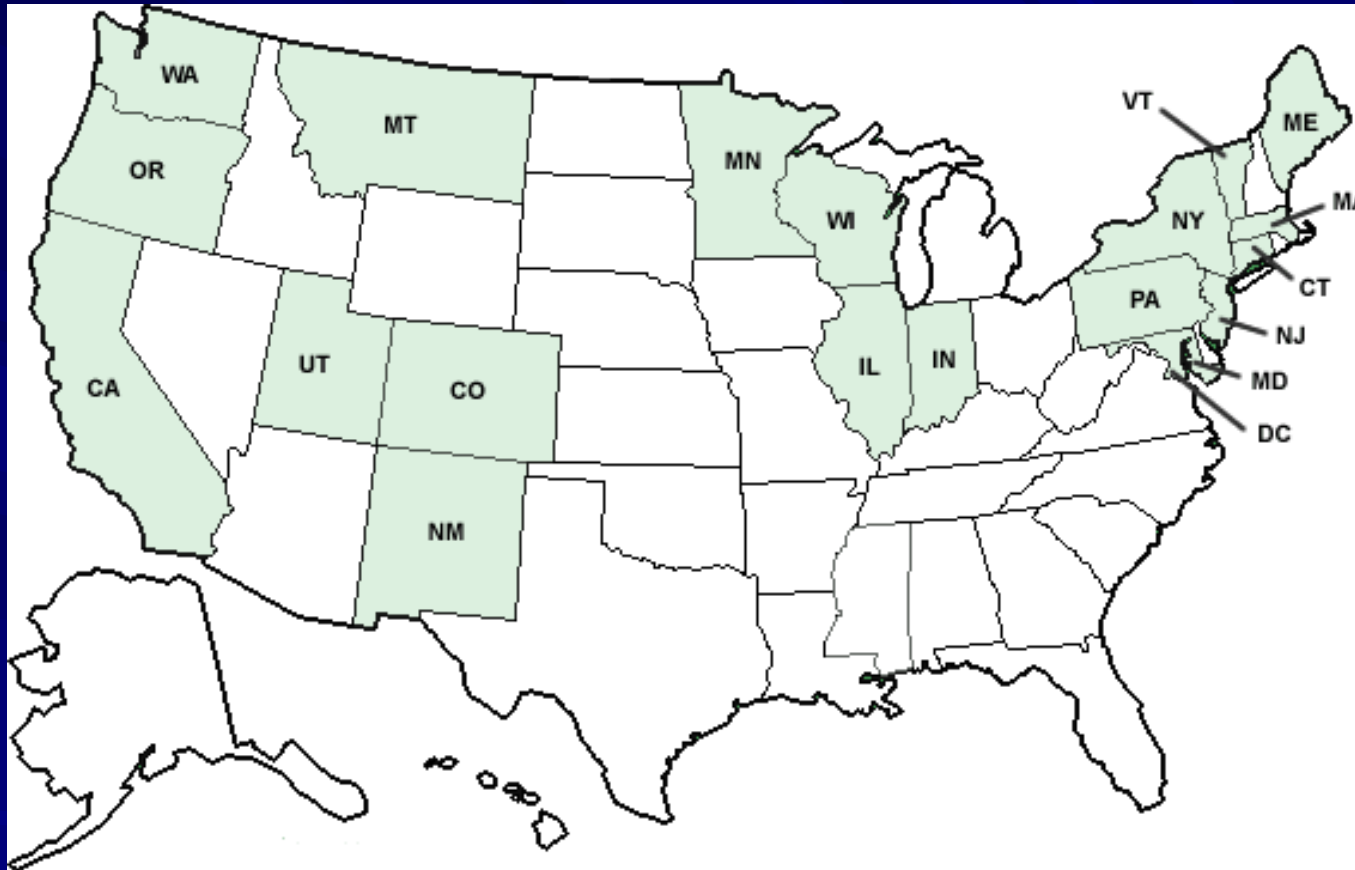
# Overview of Presentation

- Current status of state health care reform
- View from Five States
- Opportunities for Advocates & Policymakers

# State Health Care Reform

- Nearly two dozen states looking at meaningful health care reform
- Using a combination of approaches
- Opportunity to address inequality in health care at the same time

# State Expansions Resource Center



[www.familiesusa.org/resources/state-information/expansions/](http://www.familiesusa.org/resources/state-information/expansions/)

# A View from Five States

- Analyzed legislation in five states (MA, WA, CA, IL, & PA)
- States are addressing the benchmarks in various ways:

## *Access to health care*

- Creating mechanisms to promote diversity among health care professionals (MA, IL, PA)
- Improving & streamlining enrollment procedures (MA and IL)
- Evaluating outreach & enrollment procedures (MA, WA, CA, IL, PA)

## *Quality of care*

- Collecting data on race, ethnicity, and primary language (MA, WA, CA, IL, PA) and publicly reporting info (MA, CA)

# A View from Five States (cont.)

- States are addressing the benchmarks in various ways:

## *Patient empowerment*

- Conducting a community health worker study to determine effectiveness in reducing racial and ethnic health disparities (MA)

## *Health care infrastructure*

- Supporting safety net institutions such as community health centers (MA, WA, IL)
- Providing incentives for health care professional to practice in underserved areas (IL)



# A View from Five States (cont.)

- States are addressing the benchmarks in various ways:

## *Policy infrastructure*

- Utilizing community health planning to better align resources and need (WA, IL)
- Creating a Health Disparities Council charged with making recommendations on workforce diversity issues, monitoring disease rates, and addressing some SDH (MA)

## *Social and community determinants of health*

- Coordinating relevant state agencies to address social and behavioral determinants

# A View from Five States

## ■ States are not:

- Assessing how affordability policies & individual mandates affect uninsured populations
- providing explicit training and reimbursement for CHWs
- developing patient education programs that are tailored to the needs of communities of color
- reducing geographic inequity in the distribution of health care services
- Incorporating use of health impact assessments (exception: WA)
- strengthening state offices of minority health

# Opportunities for Advocates

- Actively follow the implementation of new health care expansion laws
- Ride the health care reform wave
- Build bridges, knock down silos
- Recognize appropriate vehicles, create new ones

# Opportunities for Policymakers

- Make universal health care a core goal and cover everyone
- Assess how states policies to expand coverage affect currently underserved groups
- Be an agent for change
- Reach for low-hanging fruit

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