

Statement of
Mary Wakefield, Ph.D, R.N.
Acting Deputy Secretary
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
on
Cost-Sharing Reductions
before
Committee on Ways and Means
United States House of Representatives
July 7, 2016

Chairman Roskam, Ranking Member Lewis, and Members of the Committee, I appreciate this opportunity to testify on the Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) implementation of the Affordable Care Act (ACA), including the provisions of the ACA that require the Executive Branch to make advance payments of premium tax credits and cost-sharing reductions that help to defray the cost of insurance coverage.

The ACA is expanding access to care for millions of Americans who would otherwise be uninsured, improving quality of care for people no matter how they get their insurance, while slowing the growth in health care costs nationwide. An estimated 20 million Americans gained coverage since the Affordable Care Act's coverage provisions have taken effect and cost-sharing reductions are a key part of providing more Americans with access to quality health care they can afford. This financial assistance helps low-income Americans to see their doctor on a regular basis and afford their out-of-pocket health care expenses.

The Administration has faithfully implemented the Affordable Care Act, including provisions that require the Executive Branch to make advance payments of premium tax credits and cost-sharing reductions that help to defray the cost of insurance coverage. Both the advance payments of premium tax credits and cost-sharing reductions are fully funded by the Affordable Care Act, through the appropriation provided under 31 U.S.C. § 1324. As you know, the House has filed a lawsuit against HHS concerning the payment of cost-sharing reductions. This issue continues to be litigated, and for any additional information, I would refer you to the briefs in the case.

We remain committed to cooperating with the Committee to provide the information it needs to fulfill its legislative responsibilities, while also taking into account the significant confidentiality interests of the Executive Branch, and we look forward to continuing to work with you and your staff on important matters related to the implementation of the ACA.