

# FEDERAL NEWS WEEKLY SUMMARY CONTINUED



Colorado Springs; Long Beach; Lancaster, CA; Salt Lake City; White Plains; Baltimore; Louisville; Rogue Valley; West Virginia; Sacramento, Oakland; San Joaquin Valley; San Francisco; South Bay (San Jose); Western New York; Portland, OR; St. Louis; Norwalk; Waterbury; Norwich; New London; Peoria; SW Kansas; Central New York; Dallas-Fort Worth; Honolulu; Missoula, MT; New Haven; Central Arkansas; Paso del Norte; Pittsburgh; Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG); Los Angeles; Coachella Valley, CA; and Weld/Larimer/Rocky Mountain National Park.

—US DEPT. OF ENERGY  
10/10/96

## HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

### WELFARE REFORM HIGHLIGHTS

■(GIT) President Bill Clinton signed the so-called Welfare Reform Bill, also known as The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, on Aug. 22. The bill contains strong work requirements, a performance bonus to reward states for moving welfare recipients into jobs, state maintenance requirements and support for families moving from welfare to work.

Following are some highlights of the 300-plus page act.

#### A Transition From Welfare To Work

✓ Work requirements: Welfare recipients must work after two years of public assistance, with few exceptions.

✓ Transition support: The new law provides \$14 billion in child care funding to help more mothers move into jobs.

✓ A five-year limit: Families who have received assistance for five consecutive years will be ineligible for cash aid under the new law. States can impose a lower time limit if they desire.

✓ Maintenance requirements: States must maintain their own welfare spending at least 80 percent of FY 1994's levels. States must also maintain spending at 100 percent of FY 1994 levels to access a \$2 billion contingency fund designed to assist states affected by high population growth or economic downturn. In addition, states have to main the greater of FY 1994 or FY 1995 spending on child care to access additional child care funds beyond their current allotment.

✓ Job subsidies: The law allows states to create jobs by taking money now used for

welfare checks and use it to create community service jobs or to provide income subsidies or hiring incentives for potential employers.

✓ Performance bonuses: Through FY 2003, \$1 billion will be available for performance bonuses to reward states for moving welfare recipients into jobs.

✓ State flexibility: States which receive approval for welfare reform waivers before July 1, 1997, have the option of creating their own cash assistance program under some or all of the waiver programs.

✓ Employability plans: States must make an initial assessment of recipients' work skills.

#### Promoting Responsibility

##### Child Support Enforcement

✓ National new hire reporting system: The law establishes a Federal Case Registry and National Directory of New Hires to track delinquent parents across state lines. The law also requires that employers report all new hires to state agencies for transmittal to the directory.

✓ Paternity establishment: The legal process for establishing paternity is streamlined under the terms of the new law.

✓ Uniform interstate child support laws: The new law provides for uniform rules, procedures and forms for interstate cases.

✓ Computerized statewide collections: States are required to establish central registries of child support orders and centralized collection and disbursement units.

✓ New penalties: Under the new law, states can implement tough child support enforcement techniques.

✓ "Families First": Under the so-called Families First policy, families no longer receiving assistance will have priority in the distribution of child support arrears.

✓ Access and visitation programs: In an effort to increase noncustodial parents' involvement in their children's lives, the new law includes grants to help states establish programs that support and facilitate noncustodial parents' visitation with and access to their children.

##### Teen Parent Provisions

✓ Live at home, stay in school: Under the new law, unmarried minor parents will be required to live with a responsible adult or in an adult-supervised setting and to participate in educational and training activities in order to receive assistance.

✓ Teen pregnancy prevention: Beginning

in FY 1998, \$50 billion annually in mandatory funds will be added to the appropriations of the Maternal and Child Health Block Grant for abstinence education. Additionally, the Secretary of Health and Human Services will establish and implement a strategy to prevent non-marital teen births and to assure that at least 25 percent of communities have teen pregnancy prevention programs.

—SHAWN ASHLEY  
10/07/96

### HEALTH RESEARCH GRANTS AWARDED TO SIX UNIVERSITIES

■(WASHINGTON) The Health Care Financing Administration last week announced it has awarded six universities federal grants totaling \$663,148 to encourage health services research.

The grants for fiscal year 1996 range from about \$84,000 to \$160,000. They are part of the 1996 Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) grants program, which focuses on HCFA's research and demonstration projects related to health care service delivery and financing issues in the African-American community.

The grants were awarded to Alcorn State University, Lorman, MS; Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University, Tallahassee, FL; Howard University, Washington, DC; Morgan State University, Baltimore, MD; Tennessee State University, Nashville, TN; and the University of Maryland-Eastern Shore, Princess Anne, MD.

The grants program is designed to:

- Encourage new health services researchers to pursue research issues which impact the Medicare and Medicaid programs;
- Assist HBCUs by supporting outside research in the health services area;
- Increase the pool of African-American researchers available to carry out HCFA's research, demonstration and evaluation programs.

—US DEPT. OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES  
10/07/96

### REPORT SHOWS GAINS IN NATION'S HEALTH

■(WASHINGTON) Last Friday, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Donna Shalala released annual preliminary vital statistics findings for 1995, showing broad gains in national health indicators.

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