

The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has released a Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) for federal loans for the creation of Consumer Operated and Oriented Plans (CO-OPs) at <http://www.grants.gov/search/search.do;jsessionid=5PyWTyzR5n1f9nZ9JQ4q2PH6xY7Shpsp7cQTjbFpyZQy2vV4q872!-370087949?oppld=109093&mode=VIEW>.

The first round of applications are due October 17, 2011. Remaining funds will be available to additional applicants through December 31, 2012. Funding will be awarded on a competitive basis. Successful applicants in the first round will be awarded funds by January 12, 2012. HHS also announced that there will be a listening session for potential applicants on the FOA and the application process on August 10, time TBD. Details on this listening session will be posted on the CMS website in the coming days. The CO-OP program was created in the Affordable Care Act (ACA) to further insurance market competition. \$3.8 billion in federal loans are available for the funding of start up and solvency requirements for these newly formed insurance entities. The AMA already has provided comments to HHS on the development of CO-OPs to ensure that they can be physician-led. Last week, CMS issued a proposed rule on CO-OP structure. See the Federal Register notice at http://www.ofr.gov/OFRUpload/OFRData/2011-18342_PI.pdf. Comments on the proposed rule are due September 16th and the AMA will be submitting comments. For more information on CO-OPs, including the AMA's previous comments submitted to HHS, go to www.ama-assn.org/go/aco. If you have further questions about the development of physician-led CO-OPs, contact either Wes Cleveland (wes.cleveland@ama-assn.org) or Henry Allen (henry.allen@ama-assn.org), in the AMA's Division of Private Sector Advocacy.

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