

Readers optimistic about health reform opportunities in 2012

Last week in our Preview Issue we featured your challenges and opportunities for the new year. Here are more of your responses:

E. Clarke Ross, D.P.A., policy associate, American Association on Health and Disability, Rockville, Md.:

I believe the most pressing challenges for 2012 are maintenance of the Medicaid safety net to support integrated community living for persons with chronic disability and maintenance of Affordable Care Act (ACA) funding to ensure health insurance expansion through implementation of "health insurance exchanges" and "essential health benefits."

Advocating Medicaid protections and ACA health insurance coverage expansions, the American Association on Health and Disability (AAHD) is focused on promoting health and wellness for persons with chronic disability, including full funding of the federal CDC disability programs, Prevention and Public Health Fund, Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) innova-

Continues on next page

6 Mental Health Weekly January 9, 2012

Continued from previous page
 tions, community transformation projects, and federal initiatives to reduce the co-occurrence of chronic health conditions and to reduce health disparities. These funds are highly vulnerable to the current political dynamics. These programs support such service delivery innovations as shared decision-making and meaningful consumer and family involvement, choosing "care coordinators" and "navigators," physician culture change, integrating primary care and specialty care including medical or health homes, publicly available performance measurement, and "meaningful use" (MU) health information technology. MU criteria are intended to ensure integrated health records to promote care coordination and provide patients and their families reliable, valid, and meaningful information to make informed medical decisions.