

HHS GRANTS 106 NEW HEALTHCARE WAIVERS

The Hill -

Aug. 19, 2011: The Obama administration granted another 106 waivers last month from part of the healthcare reform law the first round of three-year waivers the Health and Human Services Department has approved.

The new approvals bring the total number of waivers to 1,472, according to HHS. Those figures cover waivers granted through the end of July. HHS will stop granting new waivers after September.

Some healthcare plans, usually offered to low-wage workers, place caps on how much the policy will pay out in benefits over a year. The healthcare reform law gradually bans those limits, but allows HHS to grant waivers to companies that would be more likely to stop offering coverage altogether than to provide more robust coverage.

HHS has been approving a new batch of one-year waivers at the end of each month. The department announced it would cut off applications after September, but let companies that received one-year exemptions extend their waivers through 2014. The 106 waivers approved in July will last three years.

Republicans say the waivers are proof that the healthcare law is flawed.