



Senate Health Care Reform Package Will Secure Coverage and Improve Quality of Care

We are on the verge of an historic achievement. The passage of health care reform legislation that moves us toward health security for all Americans is of paramount importance.

We recognize that the process has required compromise. However, the failure to act and move reform forward would harm millions of families. **The Senate Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act contains many strong provisions that will benefit consumers.** It will help provide quality, affordable coverage for all by offering strong consumer protections, containing health care costs, improved choice and competition among health plans, lowered costs of insurance policies, and greater accountability from health insurance companies.

The Senate Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act

Guarantees secure insurance coverage by:

- Preventing insurers from denying coverage to people with pre-existing conditions
- Barring insurance companies from basing premiums on health conditions or gender
- Restricting insurers from raising rates when people get sick
- Requiring insurers to devote at least 85 percent (80 percent in the individual and small market) of premiums to medical benefits. If insurance companies do not meet this threshold, they must provide rebates to consumers

Creates affordable health care options for individuals and families by:

- Significantly expanding Medicaid, including adults who are currently ineligible in most states. This will result in newly covering 15 million people
- Providing subsidies to make health insurance more affordable for 20 million low- and moderate-income families
- Requiring insurers to cap out-of-pocket costs for all families and eliminating lifetime caps on benefits and medical services
- Assisting small business in purchasing health benefits for employees
- Extending funding for the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) until 2015

Allows individuals and families to make informed choices about health insurance by:

- Creating state-based Exchanges – a marketplace to compare and purchase certified health plans. The Exchange will make it easier for consumers to find the best plan to meet their needs
- Funding the immediate startup of state-based consumer assistance offices dedicated to answering questions about insurance options, assisting with enrollment and helping to navigate the health care system

Improves quality of care by:

- Promoting access to primary and preventive care
- Strengthening infrastructure by rewarding care coordination, innovation and efficiency within the delivery system to improve the quality of care
- Shifting the health care system toward more patient- and family-centered care
- Developing pathways to test and evaluate payment- and delivery-system reforms to improve quality and lower long-term costs
- Including consumer representation in many of the key quality efforts

Strengthens Medicare by:

- Limiting cost-sharing for seniors enrolled in Medicare Advantage and creating a new office dedicated to improving policies for some of the frailest and sickest elderly. It also promotes integrated care for dually eligible beneficiaries
- Beginning to close the Medicare Part D “doughnut hole,” or coverage gap. The bill increases the threshold at which Medicare Part D beneficiaries enter the coverage gap by \$500, and it provides a 50 percent discount on the prices of drugs in the “doughnut hole”