

FAST FACTS ON HEALTH CARE REFORM

FINANCIAL IMPACT ON AMERICAN FAMILIES TODAY

- Since the last big health care debate in the 1990s, Americans' health care premiums have risen eight times faster than wages. (*Robert Wood Foundation, March 2009*)
- Today, a person files for bankruptcy due to medical costs every 30 seconds. (*National Coalition on Health Care, 2009*)
- An estimated 2.4 million Americans have lost their health insurance – along with their jobs – since the start of the recession in December 2007. (*Center for American Progress, May 2009*)

TROUBLING TRENDS IN HEALTH CARE TODAY

- In less than 10 years, spending will nearly double – reaching almost \$4 trillion and totaling \$1 out of every \$5 we spend. (*Centers for Medicaid & Medicare Services, March 2009*)
- Estimates show that there will be insufficient funds in the Medicare trust fund only eight years from now. (*Congressional Budget Office, June 2009*)
- Over the past 10 years, health care premiums have increased nearly 120 percent for employers and their workers. (*Kaiser Family Foundation, 2008*)
- Today, chronic diseases result in seven out of 10 deaths and account for 75 cents out of every \$1 spent on health care. (*Centers for Disease Control, November 2008*)

REDUCING WASTE, FRAUD AND ABUSE

- For every dollar spent on oversight and enforcement to fight waste, fraud and abuse in Medicare, Americans can see up to \$17 in return. (*Health and Human Services Office of Inspector General, 2009*)
- Last year alone, better enforcement measures to fight waste, fraud and abuse in Medicare netted Americans more than \$16 billion in savings. (*Health and Human Services Office of Inspector General, 2009*)

QUALITY, AFFORDABLE HEALTH INSURANCE FOR ALL AMERICANS

- The number of underinsured people – or those who are insured but cannot afford enough insurance to protect them from high medical costs – has risen 60 percent since 2003, totaling an estimated 25 million adults. (*The Commonwealth Fund, June 2008*)
- Providing coverage to today's uninsured population would increase America's economic well-being by an estimated \$100 billion a year. (*The Council of Economic Advisors, June 2009*)

SAVING MONEY THROUGH REFORM

- If the entire health care system were to perform as well as the top 10 percent of today's health plans, nearly 88,900 lives could be saved and up to \$3.7 billion in unnecessary hospital costs could be avoided each year. (*National Committee for Quality Assurance, 2008*)
- Health care reform could reduce costs for small businesses by as much as \$855 billion over the next 10 years, a reduction of 36 percent. (*Small Business Majority, June 2009*)

Health Insurance Reform FAQ

Q: The majority of Americans have health insurance, can afford it, and are happy with their doctor. Why do we need to “fix” the system?

- Right now, the health care system is unsustainable for American families, American businesses, and federal programs like Medicare.
- Premiums are skyrocketing and thousands of Americans are losing their health insurance every day.
- Health insurance reform will lower costs for Americans and make health care an affordable option, not a luxury purchase.

Q: Democrats claim we will be able keep our health care coverage if we like it but Republicans say we won't. Who's right?

- A large number of Americans are happy with their doctor and with their coverage and no one wants to – or will – take away coverage from millions of Americans who are happy with their doctors.
- Health insurance reform protects existing coverage, and encourages employers to maintain it.
- Americans who are not satisfied with the current coverage will have new choices and competition in the market will create stable health care options for all Americans.

Q: What's a health insurance exchange?

- A health insurance exchange creates a more organized and competitive marketplace for health insurance.
- An exchange lets you have control over your health care – you'll have a choice on what type of insurance you want. And health insurance companies will compete for your business.
- This means that if your employer doesn't offer insurance, you will be able to shop around and find the plan that best fits your needs.

Q: The President and some Democrats have argued that employers should be required to provide insurance. Republicans claim that such a move would force companies out of business – who's right?

- Many employers, including Wal-Mart, agree that employers should share some of the responsibility of providing coverage to their employees.
- Companies shouldn't be able to get a leg up on competitors simply by removing health insurance coverage for their employees.
- For those Americans that like their coverage and want to keep it, this idea helps ensure they can.
- Not only is this idea good for employees, it also helps employers because it puts businesses on a level playing field.
- Health insurance reform will not burden small businesses; in fact, they will receive tax credits to assist with the cost of offering their employees health benefits.

Q: What are politicians talking about when they refer to “bending the cost curve?”

- Bending the cost curve means slowing the out-of-control growth in medical spending.
- That means making sure the entire health system spends less.
- We can do this by making care more efficient and creating incentives for prevention and wellness, so people don't get sick in the first place and won't have to rely on costly forms of treatment like visiting the emergency room.