

Health Care Talking Points

The American people have spoken. They don't want government-run health care replacing their current health care. Republicans are on the side of the American people.

President Obama and Speaker Pelosi should scrap their current plan [H.R. 3200] and start over, and work with Republicans for responsible reforms our nation can afford.

Republicans believe health care reform should:

- Ensure that the government does not interfere with the doctor/patient relationship.
- Ensure that the government does not deny care on the basis of age or gender.
- Ensure that the government does not break the bank at a time when America simply cannot afford it.

Republicans agree:

- If you lose or change your job, you and your family should continue to have access to affordable health coverage.
- If you have a pre-existing condition, you should not be denied access to coverage.
- Any medical liability reform should be real and meaningful.

The health care bills offered by Congressional Democrats do not meet these standards. Attached is a policy document that provides further details.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Does the House Democrats' bill prohibit federal bureaucrats from interfering with relationships between patients and their doctors?

A: No. In fact, it is quite the opposite. H.R. 3200 creates an entirely new layer of federal bureaucracy, paving the way for government bureaucrats to intercede and make decisions for patients and their doctors. The bill gives unprecedented power to a "Health Choices Commissioner" to determine what is acceptable health care coverage for all Americans, including the level of benefits that must be offered. Giving government bureaucrats the power to decide--instead of doctors and patients-- what kind of health coverage you need isn't health "reform."

Q: Does the House Democrats' bill prohibit federal bureaucrats from denying access to life-saving treatments?

A: No. No such prohibitions exist for the proposed new government-run health plan or rules for participation in heavily regulated new insurance exchanges. Given President Obama's comments that, "The chronically ill and those toward the end of their lives are accounting for potentially 80 percent of the total health care bill out here....There is going to have to be a very difficult democratic conversation that takes place," many may be concerned that this lack of a clear prohibition could lead to government-imposed rationing of life-saving treatments solely on cost grounds. Because the legislation lacks meaningful safeguards, federally funded comparative effectiveness research can be used to make cost based decisions to deny or limit reimbursement levels for certain treatments and services by any government or private entity.

Q: Does the House Democrats' bill ensure that the government does not break the bank at a time when America simply cannot afford it?

A: No. CBO estimates that the bill will increase the deficit by \$239 billion in the first ten years. Even this is misleading though, since the tax increases in the bill start immediately, but the new spending is delayed. Once the spending fully starts, the bill adds over \$60 billion a year to the deficit. Furthermore, the bill does nothing to lower the cost of health care, but actually increases costs for many Americans.

Q: Do House Republicans support increased access to affordable health care options for those who lose or change jobs?

A: Yes. Republicans believe in providing individuals and families with more affordable options without costly mandates by expanding insurance market competition. Our plan includes common-sense reforms to fix our nation's health care system, such as ensuring every individual and small business has access to the same tax incentives and pooling opportunities that unions and large corporations have today and allowing families to buy insurance across state lines.

Q: Do Republicans support covering individuals with pre-existing conditions, including those denied by health insurers?

A: Yes. Republicans believe that all individuals, including those with pre-existing conditions, should have access to affordable health coverage. Republicans agree with President Obama that State-based high-risk pools provide an effective way to cover individuals with pre-existing conditions, and support reforms, like Universal Access Programs, to expand and strengthen this critical coverage mechanism for those with chronic illnesses.

Q: Do Republicans support meaningful medical liability reform?

A: Yes. Republicans have supported and passed medical liability reform legislation which is modeled after the successful state laws of California and Texas. Republicans agree with President Obama that defensive medicine drives up health care costs. A recent study published in Health Affairs focuses on how increasing liability costs could affect physician practice patterns, such as increasing the use of diagnostic procedures. The study finds that an increase in malpractice premiums between 2000 and 2003 is associated with an increase in total Medicare spending of more than \$15 billion. Some estimates have placed defensive medicine costs at more than \$100 billion.