



A First 100 Days Health Agenda: Building Momentum for Reform.

Introduction

The First 100 Days Health Agenda aims to build momentum for quality, affordable and accessible health care for all and to improve the nation's health. It responds immediately to the deepening economic crisis by shoring up and expanding existing public health insurance programs. And it makes a down payment on eliminating the social and economic policies that make people sick.

When enacted, the provisions of the Agenda will themselves provide a substantial financial stimulus and relieve serious financial pressures facing individuals and families as well as businesses, unions and state and local governments. They strengthen existing public sector social insurance programs, which are uniquely equipped to extend coverage to everyone while controlling costs.

The Agenda consists of two parts. The first comprises measures that can be enacted in the First 100 Days and that expand health coverage and access through public sector programs, halt the erosion of traditional Medicare and improve access to affordable medicines. The Agenda alleviates the economic crisis by extending health coverage through Medicaid to all who receive unemployment insurance benefits, and increases Federal matching funds to states. It protects Medicare by eliminating excess payments to private Medicare Advantage plans, and ends the prohibition on government bargaining for lower drug prices. It supports the extension of coverage for children through SCHIP, and increased funding for safety net institutions.

The second part identifies policy and program initiatives that we should launch now even though they won't be finished in 100 days. These aim to ensure greater health justice for veterans, improve the health of the nation by tackling social and economic conditions that create preventable inequities in health, and build the basis for effective, efficient financing and delivery of health care.

We believe that these actions will forcefully address the crushing immediate needs of our country for continuity and expansion of health care coverage during the economic crisis. Taken together, they will set the stage for the more far reaching reforms that must be enacted to achieve health security for all residents of the U.S.

We encourage organizations and individuals to endorse this Agenda, and to contact members of Congress and the Administration in support of these proposals.