

A First 100 Days Health Agenda

We ask Congress and President to act in the First 100 Days to expand health care and improve the public's health: ¹

Extend and expand health coverage and access.

- Children – Expand SCHIP to cover ages 0 – 25 by enacting the CHAMP Act of 2007.²
- Medicare – Extend coverage and access:
 - Lower the eligibility age to 50.
 - Eliminate the 24-month wait for Medicare benefits for persons with qualifying disabilities.
- Medicaid – Increase enrollment and access:
 - Increase the federal match in Medicaid funding and minimize cost shifting to patients.
 - End the categorical nature of Medicaid eligibility and extend eligibility to everyone living in poverty (proposed by Sen. Baucus), and to all recipients of unemployment compensation.
 - Simplify the documentation and application requirements.
 - Increase transparency of the state waiver process that is eroding federal standards for Medicaid.
- Safety-net institutions: Increase funding for public hospitals, and for community and migrant health centers.

Halt erosion of traditional, public Medicare.

- Stop the excess payments to Medicare Advantage plans. (President Obama favors this.)
- Cancel the 2010 Medicare Comparative Cost Adjustment demonstration. (Speaker Pelosi favors this.)
- Eliminate the arbitrary 45% cap on general revenue funding for Medicare. (The House refuses to implement it.)
- Eliminate means-tested (income-based) premiums for Medicare Part B.

Improve access to affordable medicines.

- Create a public prescription drug benefit within traditional Medicare, requiring CMS to negotiate drug prices.
- Allow re-importation of prescription drugs.

Policy and Program Initiatives for the First Year

Ensure health justice for veterans

- Eliminate the barriers (financial, administrative and gender) to timely health care for veterans.

Improve the health of the nation

- Take steps now to link action across government sectors (employment, housing, education, environment, commerce and trade, health) to address the social and economic conditions and policies that make people sick and produce health inequities: economic deprivation, discrimination, and adverse conditions at work, in the environment, and in the neighborhood.³ Make improving health and reducing health inequities a criterion for all government initiatives.

Build a basis for effective, efficient financing and delivery of health care

- Speed up the development of an adequate primary care workforce.
- Investigate the effectiveness, efficiency, and discriminatory practices in the health insurance industry.
- Compare effectiveness of medical treatments and implement best practices.
- Propose adequate, stable Medicare financing with cost-growth containment to ensure Medicare's continued ability to meet beneficiary needs without being burdensome financially.
- Enact universal coverage for quality, affordable, publicly accountable health care.

¹ Our nation's hard-won commitment to parity for mental health coverage must be implemented throughout.

² The Child Health and Medicare Protection Act of 2007 was passed by an overwhelming majority in the House of Representatives, August 1, 2007. Not considered by the Senate. Supported by then Senator Obama.

³ See report of the World Health Organization's Commission on the Social Determinants of Health:

http://www.who.int/social_determinants/final_report/en/index.html.