

The time for health care reform is now. For too long, we have allowed a system to deny coverage when people need it most. For too long, we have supported a system that provides different access and quality of care to folks not based on a necessity of medical care but rather on unreasonable health insurance provisions or unsustainable cost escalation for medical services. For the first time in decades there is a common will among our President, our Congress, and the American people to fix this truly broken system. It is a moral and economic imperative that we address this problem now.

The growing cost of health care is one of the biggest drags on our economy. It is estimated that by 2025, 1 out of every 4 dollars will be used up in the health care system if we don't fix the problem now. This week the House continues to move forward with historic legislation—the American Affordable Health Choices Act—to reform our health care system and ensure affordable, quality care for all Americans. House leadership and the Committees on Education and Labor, Energy and Commerce, and Ways and Means will seek to develop a uniquely American solution that builds on what works in our health care system and fixes what's broken. It will put patients – not profits – first, while reducing the burden of ballooning health care costs on American families, businesses and our fiscal future.

There are 168,000 uninsured individuals in the 20th congressional district alone—that means 25% of people I represent do not have health care coverage. That is why I am taking the time to work alongside my colleagues to craft a comprehensive reform bill to solve the ever growing crisis. Currently, the House is considering the American Affordable Health Choice Act. I am pleased that the legislation will provide the hard working people of San Antonio with access to high-quality, affordable insurance. Under this legislation, small businesses with 25 employees or less and average wages of less than \$40,000 qualify for tax credits of up to 50% of the costs of providing health insurance. In my district there are up to 12,700 small businesses that could qualify for these credits.

Health care reform is needed to put us back on the path to prosperity and fiscal responsibility. Reforming health care remains a crucial tenet of our long term economic plan. In order to save money in the long run, we will need to make an initial investment in reform. Because we can't leave the burden of that investment to future generations, we will make sure our plan is fiscally responsible. As we move through the process, we will work to find even more long-term cost savings.

The consequences of diseases and injuries won't "wait" for those Americans without health care coverage. Many members of Congress that protest that the legislative process is moving too fast do so with the objective of making sure that health care reform is not enacted. We must make sure that a distinction is made between those who have good faith questions about the specifics of any proposal from those who will never vote to change a broken system.

THE PLAN OFFERS

Lower Costs for Consumers

- No more co-pays or deductibles for preventive care
- An annual cap on out-of-pocket expenses—keeping Americans from financial ruin
- An end to rate increases for pre-existing conditions, gender or occupation
- Group rates of a national pool if you buy your own plan
- Guaranteed affordable oral health, hearing and vision care for kids

Greater Choice

- If you like your doctor and current plan, you can keep them
- More choice, with a public health insurance option competing with private insurers

Stability & Peace of Mind

- End to denials for pre-existing conditions like heart disease, cancer or diabetes
- Get needed care, no lifetime limits
- Job and life choices no longer based on health care coverage

Higher Quality

- Doctors, not insurance giants, in charge
- More family doctors and nurses entering the workforce, helping to guarantee access
- Benefits must include mental health