



## Weekly Update

### Doctors for America Weekly Update - February 12, 2010

Dear Colleagues,

As the last week demonstrates, it takes more than a Washington blizzard (or three) to slow President Obama's renewed vigor to make health reform a reality.

In this week's newsletter, we examine the President's call for a February 25 bipartisan meeting to move forward with comprehensive reform and the House of Representatives' consideration of anti-trust legislation in the health insurance market.

The president's new direction, including the February 25th bipartisan dialogue at the White House, signals a different tone for health reform - and provides more evidence that the plan for health care reform continues to take shape. Count on Doctors for America to keep you updated on news and progress from around the country on health care reform - and stay tuned for upcoming activities in Washington, D.C. to amplify our drumbeat for reform.

#### **\*Physicians Making A Difference: \***

\*Highlights from the last week\*

Dr. Saroja Ilangovan's (PA) letter to the editor about why "We must move forward" <[http://www.phillyburbs.com/news/news\\_details/article/577/2010/february/08/we-must-move-forward.html](http://www.phillyburbs.com/news/news_details/article/577/2010/february/08/we-must-move-forward.html)> was published in the Bucks County Courier Times this week.

Senator Tom Daschle joined Doctors for America for a health care reform update phone call where he praised our efforts and urged physicians to continue to contact our legislators during this critical period of the health care reform push.

Dr. Sultan Rahaman (FL) urged Congress "Don't run away from health reform" <<http://www.orlandosentinel.com/news/opinion/os-ed-letters-health-reform-020610-20100205,0,2907541,full.story>> in his February 6th letter to the editor published in the Orlando Sentinel.

Dr. Zahid Imran's (LA) letter to the editor urged people to do their due diligence <<http://www.2theadvocate.com/opinion/83975752.html>> to learn what health care reform really means in the Advocate.

Dr. Mandy Cohen's interview was featured in the latest ACP's "My Kind of Medicine" Column <[http://www.acponline.org/medical\\_students/resources/newsletter/#2](http://www.acponline.org/medical_students/resources/newsletter/#2)> .

In the last week, more than 20 letters to the editor have been submitted as a part of the LTE campaign.



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\*What you can do this week\*

Write a letter to the editor

Letters to the editor from DFA members nationwide continue to pour in - and your hard work is paying off in multiple publications!

Remember: your voice is one of the most strong, persuasive tools to pass health care reform. So keep up the good work!

If you haven't written to your local paper yet, take a moment to check out the webtool <<http://drsforamerica.org/insurancestories/lte.php>> and put your thoughts into print. Remember to refer to your members of Congress by name and tell them what you support in health care reform. Issue an open invitation to your members of Congress to shadow you in clinic or in the hospital to see the problems of the health care system firsthand!

The weeks before the president's bipartisan meeting on February 25 are critical - so make sure the pressure is on key decision-makers to continue the push for health care reform's passage.

Tell us what you've been up to

The physicians in action section of this update comes from what you tell us. Send us an e-mail and let us know what you've been doing for health reform in your community.

\*3 Top Stories \*

The Washington Post - "Finish the Kitchen" <<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/02/07/AR2010020701787.html>>

The New England Journal of Medicine - Forging Ahead- Embracing the "Reconciliation" Option for Reform <<http://healthcarereform.nejm.org/?p=2973&query=home>>

The New Republic – "Sticker Shock" <<http://www.tnr.com/blog/the-treatment/sticker-shock>>

### Key Policy Developments

1. Health Reform, Live from Blair House

Mark your calendar for February 25th. After lowering the profile of the national health reform debate, the President will resume the discussion with Republicans and Democrats alike at the negotiating table - with the American public watching via live television.



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The President's stated aim for the meeting is to walk away from the meeting with a reform package in hand. That's a goal almost two-thirds of Americans still support, according to new opinion polling - including 56 percent of independents and 42 percent of Republicans. The plan also gives Congressional Democrats a new deadline to reach a compromise between the House and Senate reform bills, potentially improving the odds for passage.

President Obama remains optimistic about moving legislation through Congress quickly before this fall's Congressional midterm elections.

Read more from the Washington Post: [http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/02/09/AR2010020902700\\_pf.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/02/09/AR2010020902700_pf.html)

### 2. Busting Health Insurance's Anti-Trust Exemption

Before Washington, D.C. was buried under several feet of snow pushing off all Congressional activity for the week, the House had intended to vote on a small piece of health reform: a bill to repeal the decades-old health insurance industry exemption from antitrust laws.

Language removing the exemption was originally part of the House health care bill; Speaker Pelosi hopes that passing the provision separately would recommit the party to health care and narrow the differences with the Senate bill, which did not include the repeal.

Debate exists as to whether removing the anti-trust exemption for the insurance industry will actually have much effect on increasing competition. Some experts say the antitrust exemption has been a "substantial obstacle" to consumer protection and other enforcement efforts aimed at insurance companies at both the state and federal levels. But other analysts doubt that the change will have much of an impact on competition or premiums - and still others worry that the effect could actually be negative on smaller or start-up companies who would be limited in their ability to look at that cross industry data.

The health insurance industry has launched a major campaign effort to defeat the bill - while simultaneously calling the bill redundant and unnecessary. Hard to square that circle. The bill will likely be taken up after President's Day Recess.

Read more from NPR: <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=123412617>

Thank you to those of you who emailed us to let us know what you've been up to. Your e-mails provide the content for the "Physicians Making a Difference" section.

Thank you, also, for your feedback. Let us know how we can improve <<http://drsforamerica.org/poll/newsletter.php>> this newsletter. Remember, you can share this newsletter via facebook <<http://bit.ly/44stwW>> , twitter <<http://bit.ly/1pQMnw>> , or linkedIn



## Weekly Update

<<http://bit.ly/31WS9M>> . You can also download this newsletter as a PDF  
<<http://drsforamerica.org/documents/weeklyupdates/healthreformupdate210110.pdf>> .

Sincerely,

The Doctors for America Team

-- Doctors for America is a grassroots group of over 16,000 physicians and medical students in all 50 states. Together we are committed to building a health system that works better for us and better for our patients. To stop receiving these messages, please click here: [drsforamerica.org/cgi-bin/unsubscribe.pl?id=](http://drsforamerica.org/cgi-bin/unsubscribe.pl?id=). To contact us please e-mail [info@drsforamerica.org](mailto:info@drsforamerica.org)

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