



Weekly Update

Doctors for America Weekly Update - February 19, 2010

Dear Colleagues,

Bipartisanship is the buzzword of the week in health reform. In this edition of the newsletter we explore the February 25th Bipartisan Health Reform Summit and the Republican policies already incorporated into the health reform proposals. In the policy section, we take a closer look at the strikingly similar parts of health care reform that came from conservative policy perspectives, tipping this bill toward the bipartisan label that is bouncing around the beltway.

Video is the medium of the week. Instead of top articles of the week - we have linked to a few video clips to recap the latest in health reform, update you on new developments and make you laugh. We are also looking for the best the way to explain health reform to the American public in two minutes or less. This is your video challenge of the week. See below for details.

Letters to the editor from Doctors for America members continue to be published in newspapers around the country giving health reform a needed shot of adrenaline. Keep up the great work. Next week will be a busy week for health reform. Keep an eye on your inbox for local opportunities coming your way.

***Physicians Making A Difference: ***

Highlights from the last week

Dr. Paul Mazur's letter to the editor about the urgent need to pass health care reform was published in the Bangor Daily News <<http://www.bangordailynews.com/detail/136847.html>> .

Dr. Nate Bahr's Letter to the Editor "Stop the scare tactics" was published in the St. Paul Pioneer Press.

Dr. Lisha Barre's opinion piece, "Sickness Care System" was published in the Boulder Daily Camera. <http://www.dailycamera.com/guest-opinions/ci_14390678#axzz0fYjiYY62->

Dr. Jean Abbot was also published in the Boulder Daily Camera http://www.dailycamera.com/letters/ci_14390674#axzz0fYiv5AQi- with her letter pushing Congress to act on health care reform.

Dr. May Reed's opinion piece was published in the Mercer Island Reporter <http://www.pnwlocalnews.com/east_king/mir/opinion/letters/83941067.html> on why the take away lessons from the recent U.S. Senate race in Massachusetts are not about killing health care reform.



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Dr. Mandy Krauthamer Cohen spoke to a group of George Washington University Medical School Faculty on policy similarities and differences in the health care reform bills passed by Congress this past Tuesday.

Dr. Philip Levitt addressed a rally for health care reform in downtown West Palm Beach this week.

What you can do this week

Write a letter to the editor

Studies show <http://www.kff.org/kaiserpolls/kaiserpolls012210nr.cfm> that when people are told what is actually in the reform bills, they support it. We also know that physicians can help the nation understand the basic elements reform.

We need you to record a video and in 2 minutes or less to explain the basic elements of health reform <http://askadoctoraboutreform.org/videochallenge.php> . Get your creative juices flowing. The best video will be featured on our site. The deadline is Monday, February 21 at noon EST. Click here <http://askadoctoraboutreform.org/videochallenge.php> for entry rules and a refresher for those who may not have recently (or ever) composed a video.

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 *

CBS News (video) - What Happened to Healthcare Reform?
<http://www.cbsnews.com/video/watch/?id=6148681n>

Kaiser Health News (video)– Health on the Hill
<http://www.kaiserhealthnews.org/Multimedia/2010/February/021610HOTH.aspx>

Daily Show (video)– The Apparent Trap <http://www.hulu.com/watch/127719/the-daily-show-with-jon-stewart-the-apparent-trap>

Key Policy Developments

1. February 25th Summit Update:

Details continue to emerge about the February 25th Bipartisan Health Reform Summit convened by the White House. The meeting will be at 10am EST and broadcast live on CSPAN. After opening



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remarks, President Obama will moderate discussion on four topics: insurance reforms, cost containment, expanding coverage, and the impact health reform legislation will have on deficit reduction.

Early next week the White House is expected to post online a detailed outline of a final comprehensive health insurance reform package. Most speculate that this outline will be based on the nearly finalized Senate and House compromise that has stalled since the Massachusetts Senate election. The final outline will likely be a combination of policies that have passed through Congress, though no specifics have been released.

The White House also requested that the Republican Congressional Leadership post their own comprehensive plan for health reform so that the plans can be discussed side by side on February 25th. Thus far, the Republicans have not indicated if they will put forward their own proposal prior to the Summit.

Read more about the Summit here:

<http://www.kaiserhealthnews.org/Daily-Reports/2010/February/17/Health-Summit-and-Reform-Politics.aspx>

2. Despite Claims, G.O.P. No Stranger to Health Reform Policies

What began as a whispered rumor last June has now reached a fever pitch: Democrat-led efforts to reform American health care have ignored the opinions of other parties and the general public, seeking instead to promote a government takeover of health care delivery – or so the reform opponents' talking point goes.

Is that criticism fair? A closer examination of the health reform bills currently debated by Congress suggests that the health reform bills passed in 2009 bears closely resemblance to the Republican 1993 counterproposal to the Clinton plan.

What's similar between the two? The '93 Republican plan and today's reform bills both expand private health insurance coverage within a new national exchange, promoting competition under federal regulation and building upon the existing American insurance market. Key to both the '93 Republican bill and the current reform is the individual mandate to obtain health insurance, a concept designed and embraced by conservative economists in the late 1980s that was part of the '93 Republican plan.

The current reform package also incorporates a number of other proposals popular in conservative political circles: buying insurance across state lines, the excise tax on "Cadillac" insurance plans, group insurance purchasing via the exchanges and empowering the states to experiment with insurance coverage to control costs to waste reduction in Medicare and Medicaid. The bill attempts to



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try any idea to make health care more affordable and widespread. This includes a pilot project on medical malpractice reform – a central element of most Republican reform efforts in recent decades.

What's left to debate? Since the 1990s, Republican health reform proposals have evolved considerably. The party's effort now focuses on three main areas: insurance purchasing, insurance regulation and malpractice reform. Instead of an exchange, Republicans now favor enabling individuals to purchase insurance through associations or civic organizations while using health savings accounts to obtain coverage using tax-free dollars. High-risk pools that cover catastrophic health costs would be utilized to cover people for pre-existing conditions. Malpractice reform would serve as a primary cost control mechanism for spiraling national health care costs.

Read more: <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/02/14/opinion/14sun1.html>

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 <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=. To contact us please e-mail info@drsforamerica.org

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