

September 24, 2009

Dear Doctors for America Member,

Each week, we will be sending you a brief summary of key policy developments that affect doctors as well as reports on physician activities around the country. Our first installment is below. If you come across articles or examples of physician activism that you'd like to share with the Doctors for America community, please [email us](#). We'll choose the top recommendations for our weekly updates.

Physicians Making A Difference:

Highlights from the last week

- In **Alaska**, Dr. Natalie Hale gathered fellow physicians to discuss health reform and brainstorm ways to take action together.
- In **Montana**, Dr. Meg Sarnecki and colleagues wrote a column explaining why access to medical care is a human right.
- In **Indiana, California, Oklahoma, Maryland, and New York**, DFA members published Op Eds and Letters to the Editor
- In **Ohio**, Dr. Don Nguyen and Dr. Gary Leroy organized a physician town hall for the community
- In **Washington DC**, 50 DFA physicians were invited to the White House for a primary care event with Secretary Kathleen Sebelius
- All across the **country**, over 1000 calls and emails were sent from DFA physicians to members of Congress.

Top 3 Stories

- The Atlantic - "[What Baucus Got Right](#)"
- TPM - "[Baucuscare: The Good the Bad and the Ugly](#)"
- Washington Post - "[Five Ways to Improve Max Baucus's Bill](#)"

What you can do this week

Join physicians across the country in making 5,000 contacts with Congress! Whether they are for, against, or on the fence about reform, your Senators and Representatives need to hear from their physician constituents. Our [web tool](#) makes it easy to call or email. Can you take 5 minutes for health reform today? Don't forget - the voices of physicians are powerful!

**Contact Congress
TODAY!**

Key Policy Developments

1. Finance Committee starts debate over their Health Reform bill

The chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, Senator Max Baucus, released the long awaited draft of his committee's health reform bill - "America's Health Future Act." The Finance committee is the last of the five Congressional committees to act on health legislation. The bill is, broadly in line with those of the other committees as well as with the President's recently announced framework.

The bill contains provisions to expand access to care through increased regulation of the insurance industry and promotion of competition; improve quality of care by providing financial incentives for preventive care, preventing physician pay cuts, and strengthening primary and rural care; and improving affordability of insurance.

This week and next, the Finance committee will take up over 500 amendments to the bill submitted by committee members, including significant proposals to replace proposed co-ops with a public option and to alter the level of fees collected. The committee is expected to vote on an amended bill by next week.

For a summary of the Baucus proposal go [here](#). For the complete text of the draft bill click [here](#).



(Key Policy Developments continued)

2. Secretary Sebelius announces New Medical Homes State Projects

Secretary of Health and Human Services, Kathleen Sebelius, announced that Medicare would, for the first time, be allowed to participate in medical homes projects across the country. In a White House announcement attended by 50 Doctors for America members, the Secretary cited projects like those in Vermont as role models for improving the environment in which medicine is practiced.

For the full announcement go [here](#).

3. President directs HHS to begin Medical Liability projects

Following on his address to a special joint session of Congress, the President directed the the Secretary of Health and Human Services to start new pilot projects to address medical liability reform. Details of these projects are expected to be announced in the coming weeks.

Please let us know what you think about these weekly summaries - we're open to suggestions!

Sincerely,

Milan de Vries and the Doctors for America Team