



# Weekly Update

November 5, 2009

Dear Doctors for America Member,

The biggest vote in health reform in half a century is scheduled for Saturday. That evening the full House will vote on comprehensive reform legislation and we would strongly encourage all of you to **call your representative** today and tomorrow to make sure your views on this vote are heard.

Thank you for those who provided feedback about these weekly updates through our [survey](#). We are beginning to incorporate your suggestions. If you haven't taken the two minute survey, you can still do so this week. Thank you also to those who have been listening to our updates through iTunes. We'd like to expand those broadcasts to full podcasts and would love your input as we do that. E-mail your thoughts to [podcast@drsforamerica.org](mailto:podcast@drsforamerica.org).

## Physicians Making A Difference:

### Highlights from the last week

- Dr. Ian Gilson (WI) participated in a health care forum in Menomonee Falls. He spoke on a panel and took questions from some 80 community members in attendance. See pictures he sent [here](#) and [here](#).

- Medical Student Natalie Hale (AK) and classmates organized a brown bag lunch for this Thursday with Dr. Richard Neubauer, a former health policy director for the ACP.

- Dr. Elaine Bradshaw (NM) and her husband are attending the Unitarian Social Justice Committee meeting where her husband will be speaking on health reform.

- Dr. Chris Hughes (PA) met with Rep. Tim Murphy to express his support for health care reform with a public option.

- Dr. Tariq Khan (MD) provided statements on the overuse of the ED by uninsured patients, that were used by Senator Ben Cardin on the Senate floor.

- Dr. Marta Meyers (NJ) published an op-ed in the [Star Ledger](#).

- Dr. Dan Thomas (UT) published an op-ed in the [Daily Herald](#).

- Drs. Jan Sarnecki (WI) and Zarpash Babar (WV) became new Doctors for America state directors. We now have volunteer state directors in 38 states. To see the state director in your state and if you're interested in being involved in your state leadership, click [here](#).

- Dr. Dennis Richardson (CA) spoke at a townhall with Congresswoman Loretta Sanchez to help her constituents understand reform.

## Key Policy Developments

### 1. House Set to Vote on Comprehensive Bill

The U.S. House of Representative is scheduled to vote on Saturday evening on HR 3962, the Affordable Health Care for America Act. The full House vote culminates months of work in committee and with individual members. The vote is expected to be close, with no bipartisan support seen as likely. In an effort to ensure support within her caucus, Speaker Nancy Pelosi has been working to resolve concerns over a few key issues. Principle among these is concern from moderate Democrats about the wording of abortion provisions. Compromise language is likely to clarify that the bill does not alter federal policy on the availability of funds for abortions. The House rules committee is set to meet on Friday to finalize the rules for the floor debate and determine which amendments will be debated, including alternative legislation from Minority Leader John Boehner (R-OH) and a single-payer replacement amendment from Rep. Anthony Weiner (D-NY).

Efforts to garner support for the bill have been bolstered in recent days by a string of endorsements, including the support of both AARP and the AMA that was announced today. Doctors for America has also endorsed HR 3962. A more complete list of organizations supporting HR 3962 is available [here](#). Both supporters and opponents of the bill are expected to flood Congress with calls in the run-up to the vote.

Additional Reading: [Kaiser Health News](#).

### 2. Minority Leader Announces Alternative Bill

Minority Leader John Boehner (R-OH) and his colleagues released their version of a health reform plan this week. The bill serves as a contrast to the reform bill (HR 3962) introduced by Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) last week. Unlike HR3962, the 230 page opposition bill does not focus on expanding coverage or on regulation on the insurance industry. The bill, instead, focuses on reducing costs by allowing insurers to sell policies across

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## Top 3 Stories

- NEJM - [Moving Forward on Reform](#)
- TPM - [How Does Reform Work?](#)
- NY Times Magazine - [Making Health Care Better](#)

## What you can do this week

### Call Your Representative

A vote on the comprehensive House reform bill (HR3962) is expected to be close. You have only two days to influence the outcome of this vote.

Making a call to a Congressional office is easy. Use our web tool to find your Representative's phone number and [make a call](#) today.

### Tune in Tonight

Join a special conference call this evening with CNN commentator and senior advisor to former President Bill Clinton - Paul Begala.

Registering for the call is free and takes one click. Registering will provide you with the call-in info and allow you to submit questions.

Register for the call [here](#).

Thank you to all 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. To give us a sense of how you feel about these updates, please answer our short [survey](#). Remember, you can share this newsletter via [facebook](#), [twitter](#), or [linkedIn](#). You can also download this newsletter as a [PDF](#) or listen to it via [iTunes](#).

Sincerely,

Milan de Vries and the Doctors for America Team

state lines, giving states incentives to establish high-risk insurance pools, allowing businesses to band together and purchase coverage, and lowering health care costs with malpractice reform.

According to a Congressional Budget Office analysis of the legislation, the bill would provide a modest increase in coverage of 3 million Americans as compared to an estimated 36 million Americans which would gain coverage through HR3962. While the cost of the Republican sponsored bill is lower (\$61 billion vs. \$1.1 trillion), the bill would also realize lower deficit reductions (\$68 billion vs. \$104 billion). The proposed alternative legislation is unlikely to see Congressional action this year.

Additional Reading: [CBO](#).

### 3. Timeline for Senate Vote Questioned

Supporters of reform reacted with trepidation to the possibility, floated this week by Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV), that the Senate may not complete consideration of reform legislation this year. Senator Reid is currently waiting for the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) to complete its cost estimates in order to allow him to finalize the legislation. The CBO is expected to deliver its estimates next week. Following that will need to round up 60 votes to begin the debate process. There has been recent speculation that the delay in the CBO estimates may push the timeline for health reform into next year. However, according to a spokesman for Senator Reid, "Our goals remain unchanged. We want to get health insurance reform done this year, and we have unprecedented momentum to achieve that. There is no reason why we can't have a transparent and thorough debate in the Senate and still send a bill to the President by Christmas." Extending Senate deliberation into the next calendar year is considered to significantly reduce the likelihood of passing a major bill.

Additional Reading: [NY Times](#).