



HEALING HEALTH CARE

It is imperative that we as United Methodist Women continue to push for health care reform. Town hall meetings across the country are becoming more and more visceral, and often the facts are being lost.

Reducing health care costs, increasing access for the uninsured, and increasing the quality of care for all are consistent with the The United Methodist Book of Resolutions, which states that health care is a universal right for all people in a just society: "UMC is committed to health care for all in the US and therefore advocates for a comprehensive health care delivery system that includes access for all, quality care, and effective management of costs."

The current plans before Congress are evolving. But several themes have emerged: increasing investment in health technology, providing incentives for medical students to become general physicians, and a focus on preventative care will yield enormous benefits in the future.

Many American families are being bankrupted by health care bills. People can't change jobs for fear of losing coverage. And, during a time when we are desperate for innovation and jobs, caring entrepreneurs cannot afford to start new companies and also insure their employees. It is our duty to bring health care to the 47 million uninsured Americans who need our help.



Read: The Book of Resolutions 2008 #3201, page 352: Health Care for All

Get The Facts: David Axelrod, Senior Advisor to the President recently wrote in an email: "the viral emails that fly unchecked and under the radar, spreading all sorts of lies and distortions."

As President Obama said at the town hall in New Hampshire, "where we do disagree, let's disagree over things that are real, not these wild misrepresentations that bear no resemblance to anything that's actually been proposed."

So let's start a chain email of our own. At the end of my email, you'll find a lot of information about health insurance reform, distilled into 8 ways reform provides security and stability to those with or without coverage, 8 common myths about reform and 8 reasons we need health insurance reform now.

Right now, someone you know probably has a question about reform that could be answered by what's below. So what are you waiting for?"

To find out the facts go to www.WhiteHouse.gov/realitycheck (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/realitycheck/?e=11&ref=text0>) this week to knock down the rumors and lies that are floating around the internet. You can find the information below, and much more, there. Learn more and get details:

<http://www.WhiteHouse.gov/realitycheck> (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/realitycheck/?e=11&ref=myth1>)

<http://www.WhiteHouse.gov/realitycheck/faq> (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/realitycheck/faq/?e=11&ref=myth1>)

Call: Talk to the President. Join the National Faith Community Wednesday, **August 19th at 5:00 PM EDT** to hear from faith leaders across the country and President Barack Obama! RSVP at faithforhealth.org to let our partner know you'll be on the call, submit a question for the speakers, and learn more about what you can do to help pass health reform. To listen, log on to faithforhealth.org at the time of the call. Or, you may dial 347-996-5501 (no passcode,

long-distance charges may apply). Because of the large call volume expected, *listening online is the preferred method.*

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Respond to the MYTHS:

8 common myths about health insurance reform Reform will stop "rationing" - not increase it: It's a myth that reform will mean a "government takeover" of health care or lead to "rationing." To the contrary, reform will forbid many forms of rationing that are currently being used by insurance companies.

We can't afford reform: It's the status quo we can't afford. It's a myth that reform will bust the budget. To the contrary, the President has identified ways to pay for the vast majority of the up-front costs by cutting waste, fraud, and abuse within existing government health programs; ending big subsidies to insurance companies; and increasing efficiency with such steps as coordinating care and streamlining paperwork. In the long term, reform can help bring down costs that will otherwise lead to a fiscal crisis.

Reform would encourage "euthanasia": It does not. It's a malicious myth that reform would encourage or even require euthanasia for seniors. For seniors who want to consult with their family and physicians about end-of life decisions, reform will help to cover these voluntary, private consultations for those who want help with these personal and difficult family decisions.

Vets' health care is safe and sound: It's a myth that health insurance reform will affect veterans' access to the care they get now. To the contrary, the President's budget significantly expands coverage under the VA, extending care to 500,000 more veterans who were previously excluded. The VA Healthcare system will continue to be available for all eligible veterans.

Reform will benefit small business - not burden it: It's a myth that health insurance reform will hurt small businesses. To the contrary, reform will ease the burdens on small businesses, provide tax credits to help them pay for employee coverage and help level the playing field with big firms who pay much less to cover their employees on average.

Your Medicare is safe, and stronger with reform: It's myth that Health Insurance Reform would be financed by cutting Medicare benefits. To the contrary, reform will improve the long-term financial health of Medicare, ensure better coordination, eliminate waste and unnecessary subsidies to insurance companies, and help to close the Medicare "doughnut" hole to make prescription drugs more affordable for seniors.

You can keep your own insurance: It's myth that reform will force you out of your current insurance plan or force you to change doctors. To the contrary, reform will expand your choices, not eliminate them.

No, government will not do anything with your bank account: It is an absurd myth that government will be in charge of your bank accounts. Health insurance reform will simplify administration, making it easier and more convenient for you to pay bills in a method that you choose. Just like paying a phone bill or a utility bill, you can pay by traditional check, or by a direct electronic payment. And forms will be standardized so they will be easier to understand. The choice is up to you – and the same rules of privacy will apply as they do for all other electronic payments that people make. (Source: Axelrod)

Learn more and get details:

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Tell Others Why We Need Reform:

8 Reasons We Need Health Insurance Reform Now Coverage Denied to Millions: A recent national survey estimated that 12.6 million non-elderly adults – 36 percent of those who tried to purchase health insurance directly from an insurance company in the

individual insurance market – were in fact discriminated against because of a pre-existing condition in the previous three years or dropped from coverage when they became seriously ill. Learn more:

http://www.healthreform.gov/reports/denied_coverage/index.html

Less Care for More Costs: With each passing year, Americans are paying more for health care coverage. Employer-sponsored health insurance premiums have nearly doubled since 2000, a rate three times faster than wages. In 2008, the average premium for a family plan purchased through an employer was \$12,680, nearly the annual earnings of a full-time minimum wage job. Americans pay more than ever for health insurance, but get less coverage. Learn more: <http://www.healthreform.gov/reports/hiddencosts/index.html>

Roadblocks to Care for Women: Women's reproductive health requires more regular contact with health care providers, including yearly pap smears, mammograms, and obstetric care. Women are also more likely to report fair or poor health than men (9.5% versus 9.0%). While rates of chronic conditions such as diabetes and high blood pressure are similar to men, women are twice as likely to suffer from headaches and are more likely to experience joint, back or neck pain. These chronic conditions often require regular and frequent treatment and follow-up care. Learn more: <http://www.healthreform.gov/reports/women/index.html>

Hard Times in the Heartland: Throughout rural America, there are nearly 50 million people who face challenges in accessing health care. The past several decades have consistently shown higher rates of poverty, mortality, uninsurance, and limited access to a primary health care provider in rural areas. With the recent economic downturn, there is potential for an increase in many of the health disparities and access concerns that are already elevated in rural communities. Learn more:

<http://www.healthreform.gov/reports/hardtimes/> (<http://www.healthreform.gov/reports/hardtimes/>)

Small Businesses Struggle to Provide Health Coverage: Nearly one-third of the uninsured – 13 million people – are employees of firms with less than 100 workers. From 2000 to 2007, the proportion of non-elderly Americans covered by employer-based health insurance fell from 66% to 61%. Much of this decline stems from small business. The percentage of small businesses offering coverage dropped from 68% to 59%, while large firms held stable at 99%. About a third of such workers in firms with fewer than 50 employees obtain insurance through a spouse. Learn more: <http://www.healthreform.gov/reports/helpbottomline/> (<http://www.healthreform.gov/reports/helpbottomline/>)

The Tragedies are Personal: Half of all personal bankruptcies are at least partly the result of medical expenses. The typical elderly couple may have to save nearly \$300,000 to pay for health costs not covered by Medicare alone. Learn more:

<http://www.healthreform.gov/reports/inaction/> (<http://www.healthreform.gov/reports/inaction/>)

Diminishing Access to Care: From 2000 to 2007, the proportion of non-elderly Americans covered by employer-based health insurance fell from 66% to 61%. An estimated 87 million people - one in every three Americans under the age of 65 - were uninsured at some point in 2007 and 2008. More than 80% of the uninsured are in working families. Learn more:

<http://www.healthreform.gov/reports/inaction/diminishing/index.html>

The Trends are Troubling: Without reform, health care costs will continue to skyrocket unabated, putting unbearable strain on families, businesses, and state and federal government budgets. Perhaps the most visible sign of the need for health care reform is the 46 million Americans currently without health insurance - projections suggest that this number will rise to about 72 million in 2040 in the absence of reform. Learn more: http://www.WhiteHouse.gov/assets/documents/CEA_Health_Care_Report.pdf (http://www.whitehouse.gov/assets/documents/CEA_Health_Care_Report.pdf?e=11&ref=report) (Source: Axelrod)

August 2009

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