

What Does Health Care Reform Mean for You?

We've fought to improve our health care system for decades — now we've won, and health care reform is law. What does it mean for you and your family?

- You will continue to have the employer-sponsored health coverage you won at the bargaining table.
- No plans covering AFSCME members will be taxed before 2018 – and even then, the tax only affects certain plans: those that cost more than \$10,200 for single coverage or \$27,500 for family coverage (not including dental and vision).

Here's what else the health care reform law does for you:

Provides Important New Coverage for You and Your Family

- Allows your adult children to stay on your plan until age 26 if they don't have their own coverage on the job. In 2014, children up to age 26 can stay on your plan regardless of whether they have their own insurance.
- Eliminates annual and lifetime limits on essential health benefits.
- Eliminates any limits on coverage of pre-existing conditions for children under the age of 19.
- By 2014, eliminates pre-existing condition exclusions for everyone.

Requires Additional Benefits in “New” Health Plans

AFSCME is fighting to ensure that the definition of a “new” plan be applied as widely as possible.

- Preventative health care services must be covered with no cost-sharing.
- Health plans cannot require prior authorization or “gatekeepers” for visits to an OB/GYN.

- Emergency care may not have higher deductibles and co-pays out of network, and prior authorization cannot be required.
- Treatment in qualified “clinical trials” must be covered.

Lowers Costs

Rising health care costs have been crippling government budgets and eating up much of the money available at the bargaining table. The reform law addresses these problems by:

- Changing payment practices to promote quality and begin to end “fee for service” which encourages inefficient, low-quality care.
- Emphasizing early detection and prevention.
- Significantly reducing the “cost shifting” that occurs when hospitals and other providers charge paying customers more for care to cover the bills for those who are uninsured and cannot pay.
- Addressing rising health care costs overall, which is straining government budgets at every level, and leaving less money available for other vital services. Cuts the deficit by \$143 billion by 2019 and by another \$1.2 trillion in the 10 years after that.



Expands Health Care Coverage to Nearly Everyone

Health care reform brings peace of mind to all legal residents by providing a guarantee of coverage to everyone. Over 32 million who would otherwise be uninsured will get high-quality coverage because of the reform law. This is achieved by:

- Creating a competitive health insurance marketplace for small employers and individuals known as an “exchange” that will bring about affordable group rates.
- Providing subsidies for small businesses and families so they can afford coverage. A family of four with an income of up to \$88,000 (in 2010) would qualify for a subsidy.
- Assessing penalties on larger employers who offer inadequate coverage or fail to offer coverage.
- Limiting the amount of money insurance companies can charge and limiting the amount of premiums that go for profits, overhead and administration.
- Prohibiting insurance companies from discriminating against women when establishing rates.
- Prohibiting insurance companies from rejecting someone for coverage based on a pre-existing condition or from rescinding coverage once it is in effect.
- Requiring everyone to have coverage in order to expand the insurance pool and create greater stability.

Lowers Costs and Improves Care for Seniors

- Closes the Medicare Part D prescription “donut hole” with a \$250 rebate this year, a 50 percent discount on brand-name drugs in the donut hole starting next year, and closing the coverage gap completely by 2020.
- Provides free Medicare preventive care for seniors starting Jan. 1, 2011.
- Ensures Medicare will be there for you when you retire by reducing excessive payments to insurance companies through Medicare Advantage.

Invests in the Health Care Workforce

- Invests in training for primary care doctors, nurses and public health professionals to reverse the shortage of primary health care workers.
- Enables more doctors to stick with primary care by increasing their payment rates.
- Encourages doctors to serve Medicaid patients by raising Medicaid payment rates.
- Increases funding for community health centers to double the number of patients they can serve over the next five years.



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