

A New Vision for Health Care Reform

There are many serious health care policy questions that the new Congress will have to answer when reconvening in January. Long-standing debates continue over the future of the Affordable Care Act. Sen. Bernie Sanders and congressional liberals are unrelenting in their push for a “Medicare for All” system that would outlaw private health insurance. Issues surrounding the cost and accessibility of health care and prescription drugs remain unresolved despite major congressional focus in 2022.

As recent polling has shown, Americans are looking to Congress for reforms to increase health care choices, reduce costs, and promote innovation that will be widely available to patients. Despite the complex discussions and often-polarizing debates over the future of our nation’s health care system, the new Congress will have a tremendous opportunity to make real, lasting changes to our health care system to improve quality, affordability, and availability for all. In the new Congress, lawmakers should adopt a market-oriented vision for health care reform to make this a reality.

Below are some realistic and forward-looking health care reform ideas lawmakers should look to in the new Congress:



LOWER TAXES

- Equalize the tax treatment of health care between employers and individuals. It is unfair that companies get the tax benefit, but individuals do not under current tax law.
- Expand Health Savings Accounts that allow patients to be in charge of their health care dollars through tax-advantaged accounts.



ENCOURAGE INNOVATION

- Expand telehealth services which started during the pandemic. Telehealth visits have proved to lower costs and expand access and should be made permanent
- Encourage experimentation in medical care through subscription-based, direct primary care
- Reduce bureaucratic red tape at the Food and Drug Administration



EXPAND ACCESS

- Expand scope of practice laws so that nurse practitioners and physician’s assistants can do more testing of patients without having to have a medical doctor present.
- Eliminate Certificate of Need laws in states that have them as they give existing hospitals and medical facilities veto power over the entrance of new hospitals and treatment centers.
- Eliminate obstructive licensure laws that restrict the supply of doctors.
- Encourage states to allow the expansion of retail clinics.



INCREASE AFFORDABILITY

- Expand access to Short-Term Limited Duration Plans. They are more affordable than traditional plans and offer patients more freedom to balance cost of coverage with their health care needs.
- Repeal Obamacare so that a competitive health care market can begin to emerge. Getting rid of costly mandates and regulations is a necessary part of allowing competition to sprout in the insurance market.
- Get rid of federal mandates including requiring providers to use electronic health records that are costly and time consuming for doctors.
- Encourage states to reform their tort laws so that doctors don’t have to order so many tests because of fear of costly medical malpractice lawsuits.