

HEALTH REFORM & ITS IMMEDIATE IMPACT

“Failure to Act Is Not an Option” – New York Times, 3/7/10

Democrats are continuing to move forward on health reform that will make insurance more affordable for American families and businesses and give patients – not insurance companies – greater control over their health care. Following passage of reform legislation, there are several important benefits that would take effect within the next year. The following table shows how Americans would benefit immediately under health reform and what the cost of inaction would be if the status quo continues.

This Year, With Reform	Without Reform, The Status Quo Continues...
Small business owners will receive tax credits to purchase health insurance, reducing the cost for employers and employees.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Between 2000 and 2008, small businesses employing fewer than 10 workers and offering health insurance coverage to their employees declined from 57 to 49 percent. (Kaiser Family Foundation) • Without health insurance reform, small business owners will pay as much as \$2.4 trillion over the next decade, and small business employees will lose \$834 billion in wages, due to high healthcare costs. (Small Business Majority)
No American child will be denied coverage because of a pre-existing condition.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Under the status quo, children born with chronic conditions such as asthma, or who have developmental disorders, or disabilities, can be denied health coverage.
Insurance companies will no longer be allowed to drop your coverage because you get sick.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three large insurers rescinded almost 20,000 policies over five years, saving \$300 million in medical claims. (House Committee on Energy and Commerce)
Insurance companies will be required to offer free preventive care to their customers in order to address preventable illnesses and diseases.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preventable causes of death have been estimated to be responsible for 900,000 deaths (nearly 40%) a year in the U.S. Some of the measures identified by the Preventive Services Task Force, such as counseling to quit smoking, screening for colorectal cancer, and providing flu shots, reduce mortality either at low cost or at a cost savings. (New England Journal of Medicine)
There will no longer be lifetime limits or restrictive annual limits on benefits.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For a person with employer-based coverage, out-of-pocket costs rose 30 percent between 2001 and 2006. Thirty-seven percent of low-income people and 22 percent of middle income people with private coverage spend more than 10 percent of their household income on health care. (Agency for Healthcare Research & Quality)
Parents will be able to keep their children on their insurance until they're 26 years old.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Almost 13 million young adults aged 20-29 years did not have health insurance coverage in 2008 (30%). (Centers for Disease Control)
Seniors in the prescription drug donut hole will receive \$250 to help them pay for their prescriptions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Donut hole coverage gap reduces seniors' use of drugs prescribed by their doctor by an average of 14%. (University of Pittsburgh)
A new, independent appeals process will ensure that anyone who feels they were unfairly denied a claim by their insurance company will be heard.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A survey of 1,000 consumers found that nearly one in four had a legitimate claim denied by their insurance company. (PNC Financial Services Group)