

This Week in Health Care Reform: April 9, 2010

While lawmakers remained in their districts for the Easter recess before returning to Washington on Monday, President Obama spent the week drumming up support for the new health care reform legislation.

As the health care reform debate continues to take shape this year, we encourage you and others to engage members of Congress by visiting the [Health Action Network](#).

Health Care Reform

Administration Agencies Take Lead on Health Care Reform: As Republicans continued to criticize the health care reform bill, calling it [confusing](#) for Americans and warning that it will lead to an expansion of the IRS, Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius referred to her department as a [“nationwide health insurance reform help desk”](#), acknowledging the importance of effectively enacting the new health care reform laws. She announced that HHS staff are “already acting” to implement the new law and have restructured the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services to take on new responsibilities under reform. Additionally, to help Americans with pre-existing conditions secure coverage, HHS is working with states to create a new high-risk pool program. At the same time, the Secretary warned against potential [scam artists](#) who are attempting to take advantage of some people with [promises](#) of free health coverage.

Upcoming Impact of Health Care Reform: HHS Secretary Kathleen Sebelius also spoke this week about the impact of health care reform on Americans. As early as this summer, people who were previously denied insurance [coverage](#) because of a pre-existing medical condition will be able to purchase coverage through a new high-risk health insurance pool. Beginning this [fall](#), children with pre-existing conditions will also be able to attain coverage, and adult children will be able to stay on their parent’s policy until age 26. Experts pointed out that while those [measures](#) may make a big difference for particular families, they will lead to a small decline in the number of uninsured people, now at nearly 50 million.

Additional Activities

Four Additional States Join Lawsuit Against Health Care Bill: This week, four additional states joined the multiparty [lawsuit](#) filed on March 23 by Florida [Attorney General](#) Bill McCollum in the U.S. District Court, Northern District of Florida. Attorneys General from the [18 states](#), which include Alabama, [Arizona](#), Colorado, Florida, Idaho, Indiana, Louisiana, Michigan, Mississippi, Nebraska, Nevada, North Dakota, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, South Dakota, Texas, Utah and Washington, [claim](#) the legislation places an unconstitutional burden on their strained budgets with an expansion of state-run Medicaid and that it violates the 10th Amendment of the Constitution.

Public Opinion

Americans Still Disapprove of Health Care Reform Law: Polls this week show that Americans continue to disapprove of the new health care reform legislation, with many favoring its repeal.

In a recent [CBS News poll](#), 53 percent of Americans disapprove of the legislation, including 39 percent who strongly disapprove. The poll showed that more Americans now disapprove of the legislation than before passage, and many expect their costs to rise and the quality of their care to decline.

Also this week, in a newly released [Rasmussen report](#), 54 percent of likely voters continue to favor repealing the health care legislation. Further, 52 percent say the legislation is bad for the country. Consequently, [53 percent](#) of Americans now say they trust Republicans on the issue of health care over Democrats, with only 37 percent placing trust in the Democratic Party.

Looking Ahead

As lawmakers return from recess next week, Republicans will discuss how to proceed regarding their “repeal and replace” strategy on health care reform. Democrats will continue to campaign on the health care law’s merits while the Administration begins to implement some of the law’s new provisions.