

This Week in Health Care Reform: May 14, 2010

President Obama continued selling his new health care reform law to the American people this week, while Administration officials focused publicly on their implementation of certain provisions that will go into effect in the coming weeks and months ahead of the November elections.

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

New Cost Estimate Tops \$1 Trillion: U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius issued a letter to Congressional leaders this week touting the Administration's early success in implementing certain provisions of health care reform. Meanwhile, officials from the Congressional Budget Office ([CBO](#)) reported on Tuesday that the health care reform legislation will cost about [\\$115 billion](#) more in discretionary spending over the next ten years than the original cost projections. The CBO representative pointed out that if Congressional lawmakers approve this additional spending, the total cost of the health care reform law will exceed [\\$1 trillion](#) over the next ten years. A Republican spokeswoman for the House Appropriations Committee responded saying, "If [Congress](#) were to approve all of this new discretionary funding authorized in the health care bill, almost all of the administration's highly touted savings would be made null and void."

Florida Lawsuit Poses Challenge to Federal Health Reform Law: On [Friday](#), attorneys general from seven states will officially join the multiparty lawsuit filed on March 23 in a Florida federal court. The [20 states'](#) attorneys general, led by Florida Attorney General Bill McCollum, allege the new law infringes on Americans' Constitutional rights by mandating that they purchase health care coverage or pay a penalty. Oral [arguments](#) debating the federal government's attempt to dismiss the lawsuit are set to be heard on Sept. 14, in a U.S. District Court in Pensacola, Florida.

Missouri General Assembly Passes Legislation: On [Tuesday](#), Missouri lawmakers passed a bill that says no law shall compel a patient, employer, or health care provider to participate in any government or privately run health care system. The [measure](#) passed by a vote of 108-47 and will be added to the state's primary election ballot on Aug. 3, making [Missouri](#) the first state to put the federal insurance mandate up for referendum.

Public Opinion

Majority of Americans Expect Rise in Deficit and Favor Repeal: According to a recent [Rasmussen report](#), 63 percent of Americans believe the new health care reform law is likely to increase the federal deficit. Further, 56 percent of voters continue to favor repealing the health care reform legislation, while 58 percent feel this new law will

increase health care costs.

Americans Still Unhappy with Health Care Reform: In a recent [WSJ/NBC News poll](#), results show that 44 percent of respondents called the health plan a bad idea, whereas 38 percent called it a good idea. 56 percent of voters who said they were most interested in the November elections favor a Republican controlled Congress by a 20-point margin.

Looking Ahead

Lawmakers continue to campaign on health care reform in states across the country with several important primary elections taking place next week. One such primary is in Arkansas where Lt. Gov. Bill Halter is challenging the incumbent Senator Blanche Lincoln (D-Ark.) for the Democratic nomination. Lincoln cast the deciding vote on health care reform in December but ultimately voted against the reconciliation package passed in March that made it law.