

This Week in Health Care Reform: August 13, 2010

While both House and Senate lawmakers were originally scheduled for recess this week, House members were called back to Washington to vote on a fiscal aid bill that extends Medicaid payments and averts layoffs of public school teachers this fall. House Democrats passed the measure and adjourned again until September 14.

As opportunities arise during implementation of the health care reform legislation, we encourage you and others to engage members of Congress by visiting the [Health Action Network](#).

Health Care Reform

Bill on State Medicaid Funding Becomes Law: On [Tuesday](#), House lawmakers passed a measure that disperses Medicaid and jobs funding to states across the country. The \$26 billion [package](#), passed on a largely party-line vote, gives state governors \$16.1 billion to help meet Medicaid payments next year. [Ten billion](#) dollars will go to state and local school boards to preserve teacher jobs. President [Obama](#) signed the bill into law just hours after final passage by the House.

Republicans Still Pushing for Repeal: On [Tuesday](#), Rep. Wally Herger (R-CA.) filed a discharge petition aimed at forcing the House to vote on repeal of the Democrats' new health care reform law, the second discharge petition filed by Republicans this year. House Republican leaders were quick to support the measure. In a statement released this week, Republican Leader John Boehner (R-OH) said, "The more the American people learn about [Obama Care](#), the less they like it. We need to repeal it, and start over on common-sense, step-by-step reforms to lower costs." Rep. [Herger's](#) petition would repeal the entire health care reform law, including the reconciliation, and replace it with a plan that would attack frivolous medical lawsuits and provide funding for state-run programs for people with pre-existing medical conditions.

On the Campaign Trail: While it has been anticipated that health care reform will play a major role in this fall's election, the Politico Pulse indicates that many expect the topic to be folded into a larger dialogue including other domestic policy issues like education and energy. As Politico [Pulse](#) writers note, "Expect Republicans to talk about it as part of their narrative that Washington is passing too many mandates. Democrats have listed it as one of their accomplishments for the middle class." Some House Democrats like Rep. Lynn Woolsey (Calif.) have already scheduled events with seniors to discuss health care reform.

Public Opinion

Americans Expect Health Care Costs to Rise with New Law: According to the most recent [Rasmussen report](#), a majority of Americans remain pessimistic about health care reform and its impact on the nation. Fifty-five percent of likely voters favor repeal of the

new health care reform law, while 60 percent of all voters nationwide believe health care costs will go up under the new plan.

President Earns Low Ratings on Health Care: The President continues to earn low marks for health care reform in the polls. A new [Gallop](#) poll this week shows 57 percent of Americans disapprove of the president's handling of health care policy – with only 40 percent registering approval.

Looking Ahead

Both chambers of Congress are on August recess until mid-September when they will return to Washington for a final, four week session before the midterm elections in November.