

This Week in Health Care Reform: August 6, 2010

Senate Democrats passed a fiscal aid bill this week extending Medicaid payments and averting layoffs of public school teachers this fall. As Congressional lawmakers wrap up their summer session, the health care reform debate continues to play out on the campaign trail.

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

Senate Clears Bill on State Medicaid Funding: Senate [lawmakers](#) passed a measure this week that would disperse [Medicaid](#) and jobs funding to states across the country. If passed by the [House](#) next week, this measure would give state governors \$16.1 billion to help meet Medicaid payments next [year](#), and \$10 billion would go to state and local school boards to preserve teacher jobs.

Challenges to the Health Care Reform Law in the States: On Tuesday, citizens in [Missouri](#) became the first in the nation to challenge the new health care reform law in a referendum by casting ballots in favor of [Proposition C](#). More than 70 percent of primary voters supported the measure that allows state residents to opt out of mandatory health insurance – a key [part](#) of the new health care reform law. The proposition [prohibits](#) the federal government from requiring people to acquire health insurance or from penalizing them for not doing so.

Meanwhile in [Virginia](#), a state lawsuit challenging the Obama administration's health care reform law cleared its first legal hurdle on [Monday](#) as a federal judge refused to dismiss the case. Virginia Attorney General Ken [Cuccinelli](#) argued before the court that congressional lawmakers, in passing a measure that requires people to buy insurance or face a penalty, exceeded its [limits](#) under the [Constitution](#). In addition, Cuccinelli also argued that the federal law violates existing state law, which declares that residents cannot be forced to buy health insurance. The judge argued in his ruling that the federal law presents a multitude of complex Constitutional issues

Public Opinion

American Pessimism Over Health Care Reform Law Highest Ever: According to the most recent [Rasmussen report](#), a majority of Americans remain pessimistic about health care reform and its impact on the nation. Fifty-nine percent of likely voters favor repeal of the new health care reform law, while 57 percent feel the legislation is bad for the country.

Confusion Remains About Health Care Reform Law: In a new HealthDay/[Harris Interactive](#) poll, most Americans appear to be very confused about the health care reform

legislation and how it affects them. Of the more than 2,100 people surveyed last month, 82 percent believe the health care reform law could result in the rationing of health care.

Looking Ahead

The Senate adjourned on Thursday evening and will return on Sept. 13 for a final, four-week session before breaking for the November midterm elections. Meanwhile, House lawmakers will suspend their August recess and return to Washington on Monday to hold a vote on the fiscal aid package that cleared the Senate on Thursday.