



Minnesota Universal Health Care Coalition

April 2010 E-Newsletter

Dear Friends,

After a year of wrenching twists and turns, President Obama signed a federal health reform bill in March. We devote this newsletter to explanations and reactions. The MN legislature is looking at all the fiscal and legal implications of the federal bill and has begun to hold hearings. The first question we were asked: “What does this mean for MN Health Plan?” We were quick to survey our supporters (you) for a reaction, and the message was clear whether you supported the federal bill or not: full speed ahead on the Minnesota Health Plan, but obviously ours was not a representative survey of Minnesotans; many people will think the work of “reform” is done, or that further legislation is politically impossible. The next several months will be critical for assessing the political landscape and much will rest on the outcome of the November elections. We are excited to have begun a multi-state collaboration with single-payer organizations across the country. We are working strategically to craft the best legislation, the most compelling message, and the strongest grassroots organizations possible. We are poised to take reform to the next level in our state and enact a system that guarantees access for all our residents, reduces administrative paperwork, and creates a cost-effective simple system of financing. Federal legislation is done. Improvements now must be done at the state level. On Minnesota!

Amy Lange
Executive Director

WHAT IS IN THE FEDERAL BILL?

President Obama signed the *Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act* on March 23, 2010 and the *Health Care and Education Reconciliation Act* of 2010 on March 30, 2010. Provisions of the bill will be implemented over the next several years. The bill is largely modeled after Massachusetts with an individual mandate and affordability subsidies. After only a few years in [Massachusetts](#), the evidence is clear: this type of reform does not achieve universal coverage and it does not control costs.

[Download an excellent summary](#) of the federal bill

[Download an implementation timeline](#) for the federal bill

WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR SINGLE-PAYER???

Attempts to get enabling language for state single-payer failed. While it would have been preferable for the original [Kucinich](#) or [Sanders](#) amendments to have succeeded, the current bill does not change our course. The effort to obtain the necessary waivers will continue with attempts at a legislative fix and if need be, a court challenge when a state enacts a single-payer bill. To better understand the necessary waivers for state single payer, [view an interview](#) from early March.

MUHCC'S RESPONSE TO THE NATIONAL BILL

The Minnesota Universal Health Care Coalition recognizes the recently enacted federal health reform legislation, the Patient Protection and Affordability Act, as a first step toward universal access to medical care. The federal bill is a *political* victory for advocates of reform because it affirms the principle of health care as a right and demonstrates that reform is possible. The legislation is not, however, a *policy* victory. It builds on a broken, expensive system and falls far short of its stated goals. It will not achieve universal access to health care, security and stability of health care coverage, or control of spiraling medical costs.

The Minnesota Universal Health Care Coalition is committed to taking the necessary next steps to create a sustainable health care system that guarantees continuous affordable access to quality health care. We support the Minnesota Health Plan, a single-payer plan for ALL Minnesotans.

[Read the full statement](#)

THAT REFORM DOESN'T GO VERY FAR

Star Tribune Columnist Nick Coleman, on March 27th, sums up the reason for continued efforts on the Minnesota Health Plan

... If this is "reform," it is at a snail's pace, a mammoth effort to bring forth a mouse... (but) Passage of the national measure, as limited as it may be, gives us a glimmer of an idea of what real reform might one day look like. And one promising part of that picture might emerge in Minnesota, where the Minnesota Universal Health Care Coalition (www.muicc.org), an alliance of physicians, unions and reformers, is pushing for a single-payer system... Minnesota used to be proud to lead the nation. Maybe it should take the lead again... [Read in Full](#)

THE BLOGS WERE BUZZING

Paul Krugman: "... This is, of course, a political victory for President Obama, and a triumph for Nancy Pelosi, the House speaker. But it is also a victory for America's soul. In the end, a vicious, unprincipled fear offensive failed to block reform. This time, fear struck out"... [Read in Full](#)

Michael Moore: "...But the reality is that these health insurance companies have only one mission: To take as much money from you as they can -- and then work like demons to deny you whatever coverage and help they can should you get sick"... [Read in Full](#)

Jon Walker, FireDogLake: "...This health care reform bill passed late last night and soon to be signed into law is a seriously flawed piece of legislation, for it fails to achieve the goals of real health care reform...the country needs to work diligently at the federal and state levels to correct many of the most egregious problems with the legislation"... [Read in Full](#)

David Frum: "...At the beginning of this process we (Republicans) made a strategic decision...we would make no deal with the administration. No negotiations, no compromise, nothing. We were going for all the marbles. This would be Obama's Waterloo - just as healthcare was Clinton's in 1994...This time, when we went for all the marbles, we ended with none"... [Read in Full](#)

Dr. Quentin Young: "...For those of us who wanted to see more fundamental and progressive reform - specifically, those of us who called for sharply reducing the role of the profit-driven insurance companies and Big Pharma in our health system - it's fair to say that virtually no gains were made"... [Read in Full](#)

Buddy Robinson, (Greater MN Health Care Coalition) "...This will not be financially sustainable. The can is being kicked down the road. To achieve permanent, universal, affordable care, we still need to address the basic structural reform that can bring down costs in major ways... The monumental struggle that engulfed Congress, dominated by the power and money of the insurance and drug companies, showed why full reform must come first from the states"... [Read in Full](#)

TUNE IN

On **Tuesday, April 13 at 8p.m.** (Central Time), Physicians for a National Health Program member, **Dr. Margaret Flowers** will appear on the **PBS program "Frontline"** in a segment titled "Obama's Deal." The show is said to "provide a sobering view inside Obama's deals and reveal the realities of American politics, the power of special interest groups, and the role of money in policy making."

GOING TO THE DFL STATE CONVENTION?

Want to help promote the Minnesota Health Plan?? [Let us know!](#)



CELEBRATE AND SUPPORT SINGLE-PAYER!

Thursday June 10th, 2010 Mark your calendar for the second annual MUHCC fundraiser featuring Jazz musician [T. Mychael Rambo!](#) If you are interested in volunteering or have items to donate to the silent or live auction please [contact us](#). Event will be at the Wellstone Center in St. Paul, more details to follow.



MINNESOTA HEALTH PLAN BUMPER STICKERS ARE HERE!

Available at our office, our events, or by mail.
Suggested donation: \$1.00 each.

PLEASE CONSIDER A CONTRIBUTION TO SUPPORT OUR ADVOCACY WORK- [Donate Now](#)

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