

*Update from Washington:  
National Healthcare Reform*

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# *What We'll Discuss Today*

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- National healthcare reform
  - What does reform look like?
  - Review of key addiction related-provisions in current legislation
  - Continuing efforts...

# *Status of the National Healthcare Reform Process*

- All three healthcare reform committees in the House have passed bills:
  - Education and Labor
  - Ways and Means
  - Energy and Commerce
- Senate HELP passed bill in July
- Senate Finance continues to debate, expected to pass bill this week

# *Healthcare Reform: Covering the Uninsured*

- Medicaid expansions
  - Everyone (including childless adults) under certain income would be eligible
    - Senate HELP bill=150% FPL
    - Senate Finance and House bills=133% FPL
- All bills include sliding-scale subsidies for those up to 400% FPL to buy/take up offers of insurance
- Individual Mandate
- Employer Mandate (HELP and House bills)
- Health Insurance “exchange” for small employers and individuals to buy insurance

# *Benefit Design in Healthcare Reform*

- All bills create essential (minimum) healthcare benefits package for the exchange (small employer and individual plans)
  - Includes comprehensive services
  - Benefits broadly defined in legislation
  - Creates independent health advisory board to make specific recommendations
- Senate HELP and House bills also require large employer plans to meet minimum benefit standards.

# *Specific Addiction-Related Provisions in the Healthcare Reform Bills*

- Inclusion of SUD/MH in the minimum benefit package
  - The Senate HELP bill and three House bills mandate SUD/MH services in exchange and large group plans, Senate Finance in exchange only.
- All bills require that all large and small group and individual plans adhere to Wellstone/Domenici Parity Act.
- Medicaid expansion to uninsured parents and childless adults
  - The HELP bill and House bills would extend full Medicaid benefits, Senate Finance bill would require newly eligible childless adults to enroll in a less comprehensive plan, subject to minimum creditable coverage requirements.
  - Senators Bingaman and Rockefeller are planning to offer amendments to ensure full Medicaid benefits to expansion population in Finance bill.

## *Specific Addiction-Related Provisions in the Reform Bills (cont'd)*

- Inclusion of SUD/MH prevention strategies
  - The House E & L bill would require SUD/MH screening and brief interventions as covered, reimbursable preventative services in plans offered in the healthcare exchange.
  - The House E & C bill includes SAMHSA in developing chronic disease prevention and wellness initiatives.
  - The Senate HELP bill includes SAMHSA in education/outreach campaign on benefits of prevention and would create “National Prevention, Health Promotion and Public Health Council” that includes ONDCP Director.
  - The revised Senate Finance bill requires SAMHSA to be consulted on issues related to preventing SUD and mental illness.

## *Specific Addiction-Related Provisions in the Reform Bills (cont'd)*

- Inclusion of SUD/MH workforce development initiatives
  - The House E & C bill would authorize workforce development grants for MH/SUD service providers.
  - The Senate Finance bill would include mental health and behavioral health workforce capacity as high-priority topics in the bill's National Workforce Strategy section, but doesn't explicitly include SUD professionals/services.

# *Continuing Work to Include Addiction and Mental Health in Healthcare Reform*

- Benefit design must be adequate
- Ensure access to care
  - Outreach and education
  - Regulate managed care
- Must be in chronic disease prevention & wellness initiatives
- Strengthen workforce
- Strengthen programs' infrastructure and capability
- Remove barriers to recovery, such as
  - Employment
  - Food Stamps/TANF (cash assistance)
  - Housing
  - Higher education
  - Driver's licenses
  - Voting

# *Staying Informed on Healthcare Reform*

- Keep yourself informed about developments on the federal level
  - Coalition website at: [www.lac.org](http://www.lac.org) under “National Healthcare Reform” link
  - Additional legislative updates from Legal Action Center and other field groups