



House Tri-Committee Health Care Reform Proposal

Under growing pressure from President Obama to pass health reform legislation before the August recess, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and the chairmen of the three House committees with jurisdiction over health reform unveiled a draft bill on July 14, 2009. This is the second major health reform proposal to be released, as on June 9th the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee introduced its proposal. The bills take different approaches, but both recognize the critical importance of improving the oral health of Americans and, most importantly, of providing children with oral health coverage. For more information on dental provisions in the Senate HELP Committee bill, go to: <http://www.cdhp.org/system/files/Senate%20HELP%20Reform%20June%202009.pdf>.

Dental provisions in the House Tri-Committee bill include:

1. Pediatric Oral Health Coverage. An essential health benefits package is established, including “well baby and well child care and oral health... services, equipment and supplies at least for children under 21 years of age.” Similar language is included in a version of the bill before the Senate.
2. Adult Oral Health Coverage. Allows for a “premium-plus plan that provides additional benefits, such as adult oral health and vision care.”
3. Dental Medicine Training. Creates a comprehensive program to train professionals in the fields of general, pediatric and public health dentistry. Particular emphasis is given to training individuals who are minorities, placing professionals in underserved communities and targeting children and vulnerable populations.
4. Interdisciplinary and Team-Based Models. Provides for “the delivery of health services through interdisciplinary and team-based models, which may include ... oral health services.”
5. Advisory Committee Health Workforce Evaluation. Establishes a permanent Advisory Committee on Health Workforce Evaluation, which must include “oral health professionals.”
6. School-based Health Clinic Program. Establishes a school-based health clinic program consisting of awarding grants to eligible entities to support the operation of school-based health clinics. Dental coverage is optional.
7. Public Health Workforce. Makes dental students eligible for the Public Health Workforce Scholarship, loan reimbursement, and training and enhancement programs.

The Senate HELP Committee is currently considering amendments to its health reform package. Meanwhile, the other Senate committee of jurisdiction, the Senate Finance Committee has yet to begin a markup of its version, which is expected to vary widely from the Senate HELP Committee version.

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