

HIV Health Care Access Working Group

2009 Health Care Reform Principles

Our government is seriously considering implementing major changes to our health care delivery systems in an effort to ensure that all people in this country have access to affordable, comprehensive and quality health care. Health care reform efforts offer tremendous hope to the hundreds of thousands of people living with HIV who are without adequate health care. Health care reform should encourage innovation in models of health care delivery and facilitate rapid access to new treatments and improvements in care that reflect sound scientific principles. To be successful reform efforts must adequately address several very specific issues. The list below includes the top ten changes that must be a part of a successful health care reform plan.

Ten ways Congress can dramatically improve access to affordable, quality, and comprehensive health care for persons living with HIV/AIDS in the United States:

1. Provide Medicaid to all uninsured individuals with income less than \$20,000 per year and families of four with income less than \$42,000 per year, and allow states to provide Medicaid coverage for persons with HIV with even higher income, as proposed in the Early Treatment for HIV Act (ETHA).
2. Ensure access to quality health care by establishing a comprehensive, standard Medicaid benefits package that is available in every state.
3. Keep Medicaid and Medicare health care services and prescriptions affordable for everyone by minimizing consumers' out-of-pocket costs.
4. Increase the federal contribution to state Medicaid programs during periods of economic crisis.
5. To help fight the HIV epidemic, HIV testing should be available to everyone. Medicaid, Medicare and private insurance companies should be required to cover voluntary HIV testing and counseling.
6. Improve access to health care by eliminating the two-year Medicare waiting period for people with disabilities.
7. Protect Medicare beneficiaries facing "donut hole" coverage gaps.
8. Provide incentives to strengthen the health care workforce and ensure adequate and timely reimbursement to health care providers to help promote and protect access to the vital services they provide.
9. Expand and improve private health insurance options by guaranteeing that everyone has access to an affordable, comprehensive, quality private health insurance plan.
10. Support and strengthen Ryan White Programs so that they continue to provide essential health and support services to people living with HIV and AIDS.

The HIV Health Care Access Group is a coalition of nearly 100 national and community-based AIDS service organizations representing HIV medical providers, advocates and people living with HIV/AIDS and providing critical HIV-related health care and support services. For more information, contact co-chairs Laura Hanen, of the National Alliance of State and Territorial AIDS Directors, at 202.434.8091, or Robert Greenwald, of the Treatment Access Expansion Project, at 617.390.2584.