

# Federal Health Reform: Health Workforce Provisions

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August 28, 2009

# Overview of Presentation

- What's happening in congress?
- What are the Basics, a brief overview of the elements of the proposals.
- Overview of Health Workforce Provisions
- When predicting the future, what are the special considerations?
- Conclusion

# House Proposals

## ■ Tri-Committee Proposals

- The 3 house committees with jurisdiction over health policy introduced legislation July 14, 2009, America's Health Choices Act (H.R. 3200)

- Ways and Means
- Education and Labor
- Energy and Commerce

# House Proposals

## ■ Tri-Committee Actions

- Ways and Means -  
Mark-up completed 7/17/09
- Education and Labor - Mark-up completed 7/17/09
- Energy and Commerce -  
1<sup>st</sup> Mark-up completed 7/31/09, an additional mark-up is planned when congress reconvenes to consider an additional 50 to 60 amendments.

# Senate Proposals

## ■ Senate Committees

- Health, Education, Labor and Pensions - Mark-up completed July 15th
- Finance - negotiations continue, drafting is in progress.
- Language has yet to be published from either committee.

# What are the Basics

## ■ Common Elements of All Proposals Include

- An Expansion of access to coverage through a health insurance exchange for individuals and small employers
- An Individual Coverage Mandate  
(penalties mechanisms vary)
- Employer Requirements  
(applicability varies as does the penalty mechanisms)
- An Expansion of Medicaid
  - House- all individuals with incomes up to 133% of the FPL
  - Senate Finance- all individuals with incomes up to 115% FPL, /c a possible increase in eligibility for parents, pregnant women, and children to a higher level.
  - Senate HELP- all individuals with incomes up to 150% of the FPL

# What are the Basics

## ■ Common Elements of All Proposals Include

- Premium Subsidies to Individuals (in varying forms)
- Insurance Reforms including,
  - Benefit design,
  - Guaranteed issue and renewability,
  - Cost containment
  - Provisions for improving quality and system performance,
  - National Strategies for prevention and wellness

# Overview of Health Workforce Provisions

- For today's purposes we will focus on the House Proposals
  - Provides funding for programs affecting;
    - Primary Care Workforce
    - Nursing
    - Public Health
    - Emerging workforce issues

# Overview of Health Workforce Provisions

## ■ House Proposals

### – Public Health Investment Fund

- Creates a scholarship and loan program for public health workers, modeled after the National Health Service Corps.
- Authorizes \$88 billion for FY 2010 through 2019 to support programs in community health centers, the National Health Services Corp program, the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Programs, and Primary care education programs .

# Overview of Health Workforce Provisions

## ■ House Proposals

### – Community Health Centers

- Provides \$42.8 billion for community health centers beginning in FY 2010 through FY 2019.
- Funding through the Public Health Investment Fund.

# Overview of Health Workforce Provisions

## ■ House Proposals

### – Primary Care Workforce

- Increases funding for the National Health Service Corps to address workforce shortages in high need areas. Provides \$796 million for FY 2010 through FY 2019.
- Establishes a "Frontline Health Providers Loan Repayment Program" to address unmet health care needs in health professional needs areas through loan repayment within the primary health services program for medically underserved populations. The individual must agree to:
  - Provide primary care services for 2 years,
  - Serve in a professional needs area,
  - In exchange HHS will pay for each year of service an amount on the principal and interest of the undergraduate and graduate educational loans (not more than 50 percent of the avg. award in the National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program)
  - Funded through the Public Health Investment Fund

# Overview of Health Workforce Provisions

## ■ House Proposals

- Training for general and pediatric dentistry, dental hygienists, and dental health programs
  - Establishes a program for oral professionals consisting of grants and contracts.
  - Provides \$3 billion through the Public Health Investment Fund to support the program.

# Overview of Health Workforce Provisions

## ■ House Proposals

### – Nursing Workforce

- Expands education, practice, and retention programs for nurses.
- Provides funding for nursing education, practice and retention.
- Sums authorized for these programs include \$1.4 billion from FY 2010 through 2019. Funded through the Public Health Investment Fund.

# Overview of Health Workforce Provisions

## ■ House Proposals

- Establishes a Public Health Workforce Scholarship Program.
- Qualification is contingent on acceptance to a course of study approved by the HHS Secretary and demonstration of an expertise in public health.

# Overview of Health Workforce Provisions

## ■ House Proposals

- Establishes a public health workforce training and enhancement program.
- Entities eligible for grants include;
  - Accredited health professions schools
  - State, local and tribal health departments,
  - Public-private nonprofit entities, and
  - A consortium of 2 or more entities.
- Preference will be given to programs training a greater number of public health professionals, individuals from underrepresented groups, and training of shortage area professionals.

# Overview of Health Workforce Provisions

## ■ House Proposals

- Scholarships for disadvantaged student
  - Increases the maximum loan amount by \$15,000, from \$20,000 to \$35,000.
- Creates a cultural and linguistic training program for health care professionals
- Establishes a permanent advisory committee for Health Workforce Evaluation to assess workforce needs and quality issues.

# When predicting the future what are the special considerations?

- The Congressional Budget Office released updated economic and budget projections in August with the 10 year total deficit being \$2.7 trillion higher than previously thought. Congress may have to go back to the drawing board.
- The Tri Committee bills will have to be consolidated into one before floor consideration. All existing proposals are still fluid. And
- Language from the Senate is still forthcoming.

# Conclusion

- These are just the highlights of funding for health workforce issues. Several amendments in the individual committees have been approved addressing workforce issues including but not limited to criminal background check requirements for LTC workers, personal care attendants, and diversity program development.
- Everything is still fluid, changes may still be made to the energy and commerce language in the next markup. And
- Stayed tuned for changes as a result of CBOs new projections.