



# THE WHITE HOUSE

PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH

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## Strengthening Health Care



President George W. Bush addresses his remarks to members of the media during a meeting with small business owners, health insurance providers and recently insured individuals on Health Savings Accounts, Monday, April 2, 2007, in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. A report released Monday shows the number of individuals covered by Health Savings Accounts has increased 43 percent over the last year. White House photo by Joyce Boghosian

### President Bush Delivers State of the Union Address

"To build a future of quality health care, we must trust patients and doctors to make medical decisions and empower them with better information and better options. We share a common goal: making health care more affordable and accessible for all Americans. The best way to achieve that goal is by expanding consumer choice, not government control. So I have proposed ending the bias in the tax code against those who do not get their health insurance through their employer. This one reform would put private coverage within reach for millions, and I call on the Congress to pass it this year.

The Congress must also expand health savings accounts, create Association Health Plans for small businesses, promote health information technology, and confront the epidemic of junk medical lawsuits. With all these steps, we will help ensure that decisions about your medical care are made in the privacy of your doctor's office -- not in the halls of Congress."

### SPEECHES & NEWS RELEASES

May 21, 2008

[President Bush Signs H.R. 493, the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008](#)

March 20, 2008

[President Bush Discusses National President's Challenge](#)

February 25, 2008

[President Bush Meets with National Governors Association](#)

February 11, 2008

[President and Mrs. Bush Host Heart Truth Reception](#)

[Fact Sheet: The Heart Truth: Helping Prevent Heart Disease in Women](#)

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### DOCUMENTS

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[Reforming Health Care for the 21st Century](#)

[State of the Union: Affordable and Accessible Health Care](#)

[National Strategy for Pandemic Influenza](#)

[The President's Proposals for Health Security in the World's Best Health Care System](#)

### ASK THE WHITE HOUSE

[Kerry Weems, Acting Administrator of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services at HHS](#)  
September 28, 2007



-- President George W. Bush  
January 28, 2008

### **Empowering Americans With Affordable Options For Health Care**

*President Bush Calls On Congress To Pass Standard Deduction For Health Insurance, Lays Out Key Elements Of Agenda To Empower Consumers And Make Basic Private Health Insurance More Affordable*

On January 28, 2008, during his State of the Union address, President Bush called on Congress to eliminate the unfair bias in the tax code against those who do not get their health insurance from their employer. This would make basic private health insurance more affordable for millions and give patients more choices and control over their health care. Instead of favoring Americans who get health insurance through their jobs, the President has proposed reforming the tax code with a standard deduction for every American who buys health insurance, whether they get it through their jobs or on their own.

### **President Bush Has A Strong Agenda To Expand Access To Affordable Health Care And Empower Consumers To Receive Treatment That Best Meets Their Needs**

The President believes the Federal government can help make health care more accessible and affordable, while leaving medical decisions in the hands of patients and the doctors that treat them.

The President believes as many Americans as possible should have private health care coverage, which is better for consumers because it offers choice, flexibility, and increased quality of care through competition. His health care agenda will help more Americans receive the health care they need at a price they can afford, while empowering consumers to make their own decisions to best meet their health needs.

- **The President reformed Medicare to add a prescription drug benefit and give beneficiaries more private plan choices.** These programs have been a great success for our Nation's Medicare beneficiaries. The Medicare prescription drug benefit is now in its third year of operation and more than 32 million beneficiaries, including nearly 10 million low-income beneficiaries, now have coverage in a standalone drug plan, through a Medicare Advantage drug plan, or through their employer retiree plans. Thirty-nine million, or close to 90 percent of eligible beneficiaries, now have creditable drug coverage through Part D or another source, and the estimated costs of this program to taxpayers have declined about 38 percent since enactment. Nearly nine million beneficiaries are enrolled in Medicare Advantage and receive their comprehensive Medicare benefits through a private plan option.
- **The President has proposed expanding Health Savings Accounts (HSAs).** In 2003, President Bush signed into law HSAs to allow people to save money for health care tax-free, and to take these accounts with them as they move from job to job. These portable accounts are affordable for individuals and small businesses, and they offer consumers greater ownership and control over their health care decisions. In 2007, there were 4.5 million Americans enrolled in consumer-directed health plans with HSAs. The President has proposed policies that would expand the HSA option to more Americans.

Julie Goon, Special Assistant to the President for Economic Policy (Health Care)  
April 3, 2007



Michael Leavitt, HHS Secretary  
July 31, 2007  
July 20, 2007  
February 21, 2007  
February 16, 2006  
June 16, 2005



Al Hubbard, NEC Director  
January 26, 2007  
April 5, 2006  
February 14, 2006



November 1, 2005  
Dr. Julie Gerberding, CDC Director, Discusses Avian Flu



September 9, 2005  
Surgeon General Carmona Discusses Hurricane Relief



August 19, 2005  
John Walters, Director, Office of National Drug Control Policy



January 27, 2005  
Alan Gilbert Discusses Health Care



October 19, 2004  
HHS Secretary Thompson Discusses Flu Vaccine



September 30, 2004  
Kristen Silverberg Discusses Health Care



Doug Badger, Senior Health Policy Advisor  
April 30, 2004  
February 4, 2004



### **RADIO**

April 5, 2005  
Al Hubbard talks about the economy and health savings accounts with Jim Vicevich, WTIC, Farmington, CT.



November 2, 2005  
Dr. Anthony S. Fauci, Discusses Pandemic Flu



- **The President has taken steps to increase the transparency of America's health care system and empower Americans to find better value and better care.** He has directed Federal agencies to share information with beneficiaries about prices paid to health care providers for procedures and about the quality of services provided by doctors, hospitals, and other health care providers. Increased transparency about prices and quality will help bring more competition to health care and enable consumers to make better health care purchasing choices.
- **The President is working to improve the adoption of health information technology.** Electronic health records show promise as a tool to help improve the efficiency and effectiveness of medical treatment. In 2004, the President launched an initiative to make electronic health records available to most Americans within the next 10 years. Health IT systems can give citizens better access to their health information, resulting in informed decisions about their care and a better understanding of the quality of the care they are receiving. In 2006, the President directed Federal agencies to use improved health IT systems to facilitate the rapid exchange of health information.
- **The President has proposed strengthening the buying power of America's small businesses by forming Association Health Plans (AHPs).** To help make the costs of providing health insurance more affordable, small businesses, as well as civic and community groups, should be allowed to band together in AHPs to get the same discounts big companies receive.
- **The President has proposed medical liability reforms to limit costly and frivolous lawsuits.** These lawsuits are driving many health care providers out of communities and forcing doctors to practice overly defensive medicine. This reduces access to medically necessary services and raises the costs of health care for all Americans.
- **The President supports permitting the purchase of health insurance across State lines.** Americans should be allowed to buy the best health insurance for themselves, based on their own circumstances, instead of being limited to only the policies available in their State.

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[Medical Liability](#)

[President's HIV/AIDS Initiative](#)

[President's Healthier U.S. Initiative](#)