



BARACK OBAMA: IMPROVING HEALTH CARE FOR THE ASIAN AMERICAN AND PACIFIC ISLANDER COMMUNITY

Barack Obama will provide health care to all Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders. He is committed to signing universal health care legislation by the end of his first term in office that ensures all Americans have high-quality, affordable and portable health care coverage. For those already covered, Obama's plan will reduce health care costs for the typical family up to \$2,500 a year. Obama will also promote prevention and strengthen our public health systems.

OBAMA'S PLAN WILL COVER UNINSURED ASIAN AMERICANS AND PACIFIC ISLANDERS: Of the nearly 46 million Americans who are uninsured, 2.2 million are Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders; nearly 12 percent of AAPI children lack health coverage. The U.S. spends over \$2 trillion on medical care every year, and offers the best medical technology in the world. Yet, the benefits of the American health care system come at a price that an increasing number of individuals and families, employers and employees, and public and private providers cannot afford.

Obama will create a new national health plan which will give Americans the choice to buy affordable health coverage that is similar to the plan available to federal employees. His plan will feature guaranteed eligibility; no American will be turned away from any insurance plan because of illness or pre-existing conditions. His new public program will be open to individuals without access to group coverage through their workplace or current public programs. It will also be available to people who are self-employed and small businesses that want to offer insurance to their employees. For those who prefer private insurance, the Obama plan will create a National Health Insurance Exchange. The Exchange will offer people their choice of a public or private health care plan, act as a watchdog and help reform the private insurance market by creating rules and standards for participating insurance plans to ensure fairness and to make individual coverage more affordable and accessible. Through the Exchange, any American will have the opportunity to enroll in the new public plan or purchase an approved private plan, and income-based sliding scale subsidies will be provided for people and families who need it.

OBAMA'S PLAN WILL REDUCE COSTS FOR AAPIS: Barack Obama's health care plan will save a typical family up to \$2,500 every year on medical expenditures by providing affordable, comprehensive and portable health coverage for every American; modernizing the U.S. health care system to contain spiraling health care costs and improve the quality of patient care; and promoting prevention and strengthening public health to prevent disease and protect against natural and man-made disasters. The Obama plan will improve efficiency and lower costs in the health care system by: (1) offering federal reinsurance to employers to help ensure that unexpected or catastrophic illnesses do not make health insurance unaffordable or out of reach for businesses and their employees; (2) ensuring that patients receive and providers deliver the best possible care; (3) adopting state-of-the-art health information technology systems; and (4) reforming our market structure to increase competition. These common sense steps will cut overall health care costs by 10 percent or more.

OBAMA'S PLAN WILL REDUCE DISPARITIES IN CARE: Tackling health disparities is a top priority for Barack Obama. Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders often receive inferior care or suffer from poor health compared to white Americans. For example, Asian women are less likely to be screened for cervical and breast cancer than white and African-American women.

Obama will tackle the root causes of health disparities by addressing differences in access to health coverage and promoting prevention and public health, both of which play a major role in addressing disparities. He will also challenge the medical system to eliminate inequities in health care by requiring hospitals and health plans to collect, analyze and report health care quality for disparity populations and holding them accountable for any differences found; diversifying the workforce to ensure culturally effective care; implementing and funding evidence-based interventions, such as patient navigator programs; and supporting and expanding the capacity of safety-net institutions, which provide a disproportionate amount of care for underserved populations with inadequate funding and technical resources. Obama also supports disease management programs to fight chronic conditions like diabetes and require that plans that participate in the new public plan, Medicare or the Federal Employee Health Benefits Program (FEHBP), utilize proven disease management programs. In the U.S. Senate, Obama helped write and cosponsored the Minority Health Improvement and Health Disparity Elimination Act to understand and tackle the root causes of health disparities.

OBAMA WILL INCREASE THE CULTURAL COMPETENCE OF HEALTH CARE WORKERS: Language and cultural barriers have been identified as major reasons that Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders have been unable to access health care services. Lack of appropriate language services result in an impaired exchange of information and a lower level of preventive care. Without interpreters, physicians may order inappropriate tests, and patients may not understand their diagnosis, medication instructions, or follow-up care plans. As a state senator, Barack Obama helped pass a law to make language assistance mandatory in Illinois health care facilities. Barack Obama will expand outreach and educational efforts to improve the language and cultural skills of hospitals to better care for the growing Asian American and Pacific Islander community.

OBAMA WILL FOSTER HEALTHY COMMUNITIES: How a community is designed – including the layout of its roads, buildings and parks – has a huge impact on the health of its residents. For instance, nearly one-third of Americans live in neighborhoods without sidewalks, and less than half of our country’s children have a playground within walking distance of their homes. Barack Obama introduced the Healthy Places Act to help local governments assess the health impact of new policies and projects, like highways or shopping centers. Once the health impact is determined, the bill gives grant funding and technical assistance to help address potential health problems.

OBAMA WILL EXPAND PAID SICK DAYS: Today, three-out-of-four low-wage workers have no paid sick leave. It is fundamentally unfair that a single mom playing by the rules can get fired or lose wages because her child gets sick. Barack Obama supports efforts to guarantee workers seven days of paid sick leave per year, a moderate proposal that should not impose too onerous a burden on employers.

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