

MEMORANDUM

To: Democratic Members of Congress
From: House Democratic Leadership
Date: Friday, July 31, 2009
Re: Strategic Communications Plan for August: Health Insurance Reform

Over the last few months, we have made great progress to advance a strong health insurance reform bill through the House, and are closer than we have ever been to taking this historic step for our country. As we prepare for the five-week-long August District Work Period, we must recognize the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead in what may be the most consequential DWP we have ever faced.

Winning the health reform debate in August requires nothing less than an aggressive, multi-front effort to control the message and keep the momentum moving forward. The continued focus and effort of every Member is critical to ensuring our success. The following memo outlines the strategic plan for Member action, earned media, and rapid response for August that will enable us to use this month to build support and momentum so we can return in September well-positioned to pass a health reform bill in the House.

Our message is simple. It is in sync with the White House. And it counters the Republican 'government takeover' message. **Hold the insurance companies accountable. Remove them from between you and your doctor. No discrimination for pre-existing conditions. No dropping your coverage because you get sick. No more job or life decisions made based on loss of coverage. No need to change doctors or plans. No co-pays for preventive care. No excessive out-of-pocket expenses, deductibles, or co-pays. No yearly or lifetime cost caps on what insurance companies cover.**

SHOWING MOMENTUM & DRIVING THE DEBATE

District Health Care Events

Members have already held more than 550 health care events in their districts this year, but we must do more. The Democratic Leadership has prepared a list of suggested district events and materials to help you organize and conduct successful events during the month of August. Press will be notified each week of a sampling of the events occurring around the country to demonstrate that Democrats are using the August District Work Period to advance the health reform conversation and build support for this critical effort. Members are advised to put a 'human face' on health reform by incorporating personal stories into events and communications.

Telephone Town Hall

In addition to the traditional town hall, the telephone town hall is a convenient and efficient tool for you and your constituents to effectively communicate. Hold a health care focused telephone town hall with guests that can help tell the story about why health reform is so important. For instance, hold a call with a doctor from your district or a small business owner whose testimony can provide a powerful narrative on the need for reform. Leadership or committee staff will also be available to serve as a resource on your calls.

Weekly Events

Each week, a national event will be organized to highlight our continued work and progress on health insurance reform. Events will range from a Committee field hearing, a DC-based press event, or events in Members' districts with Leadership or Committee Chairmen. Additionally, press will be informed of continued efforts by Leadership and Committees to move the process forward.

Radio/TV Booking for Members

An aggressive effort to book Members for national and local radio and TV interviews will ensure our message will be delivered to both large and targeted audiences. Stephanie Cherry in the Speaker's office serves as the primary booker for the Democratic Caucus and will be working to book Member interviews over August.

Print Press Outreach

Throughout August, a series of press conference calls with Democratic Leadership, Committee and Subcommittee Chairs, and other key Members will be organized with national and regional reporters to offer updates on the reform debate and to explain the components of the Democratic House measure. State and regional delegations are encouraged to organize conference calls with regional media. In addition, communications staff will be working hard to push the human-interest stories that highlight why reform is necessary and how it will benefit the average American. An aggressive effort will also be underway to ensure our message on reform is targeted and tailored to specific audiences.

Hispanic Media

The Speaker's office will work to book Hispanic/Spanish speaking members of relevant committees on Spanish-language radio and TV. Democratic Leadership will also be available to assist with Hispanic-focused district events, including town halls, telephone town halls, and calls with Hispanic media reporters.

RAPID RESPONSE

Tracking Key Members for message delivery on any day of recess.

Health Care Hotline – Leadership and Committee staff will be standing by to help Members and staff with any issue related to health care.

Daily Myth-buster Email to House staff tracking myths and misinformation in the news and including materials to respond.

Truth About Health Reform Website to log opposition myths and provide independently sourced myth-busting and fact-checking research to set the record straight.

INFORMATION & REGULAR UPDATES

Daily Emails from Leadership Offices

- Momentum/In the news roundups
- Daily Myth-buster email
- Statements on developments/framing of news
- New polling data
- New studies or reports
- New section for Daily Dose email highlighting August action

Regular Health Care Update Calls

Democratic Caucus calls will be arranged for Members to receive an update on the latest health reform developments and to share news about how the health debate is progressing in their districts. A similar call will also be organized for staff.

Health Care Clearinghouse & DemCom

All message materials, fact sheets and other resources provided to Members and staff are available on the newly-created DemCom intranet (demcom.house.gov) and on the Health Care Reform Clearinghouse: www.majorityleader.gov/members/health_care.cfm. In addition, each of the committees of jurisdiction and the Speaker's office have resource pages on their sites:

- [Energy and Commerce Committee](#)
- [Ways and Means Committee](#)
- [Education and Labor Committee](#)
- <http://www.speaker.gov/HealthReform>

COORDINATION

The Leadership is working in close coordination with the White House and outside groups (including but not limited to HCAN, Families USA, AFSCME, SEIU, AARP, etc.) to ensure complementary efforts during August. The President, Secretary Sebelius and other principals in the reform debate will be working throughout the month to hold events, promote the message in the press and move the reform effort forward. We are also working closely with supportive organizations to ensure they are implementing comprehensive plans for August that include grassroots efforts, media strategies and anything else that can add to the momentum. In addition, a list of groups supporting health reform has been provided to your offices with information on ways you can partner with them in your districts.

WINNING ON THE WEB

There are many creative ways to use New Media to help reach new audiences, hear directly from your constituents, and bolster the overall health reform message.

- **Facebook** – Become a fan of Health Reform on our Facebook page at <http://www.facebook.com/HealthReform> and use your Facebook profile to share what health insurance reform will mean for your constituents.
- **Twitter** - Follow the latest news and rapid response at <http://twitter.com/healthreformnow> and if you use Twitter, retweet messages you want your constituents to see.
- **Delicious** – Get must read news articles on our delicious feed at <http://delicious.com/HealthCareReform>.
- **Blog** – Blog on health reform on your House blog, or guest blog on websites that your constituents read. Invite bloggers in your district to your town halls and other events and ensure they have information they need on health insurance reform.
- **Health Reform Web-Page Template** – A template for a health reform web page with images and top-line messages will be sent to all offices for easy integration into Member websites. Members can customize with preferred materials, statements, and district-specific information.
- **Embeddable Online 'Flash Quiz'** for Members to post on their websites, providing users with an interactive tool to learn health care facts and why reform is necessary.
- **You Tube** – Members can produce their own recordings to post on their website and social networking pages or embed in newsletters. If you would like to record your own video and need videotaping assistance in DC, please contact the Speaker's press office at x67616 or Antonio and Rob in the Caucus office at x51400. Leadership and Committees will also be working to produce video material to highlight the need for reform.
- **Online Chats** – Leadership is identifying main stream media reporters and bloggers who are interested in conducting live online chats and interviews on health care reform. Members should contact their local media about such opportunities.
- **'Hidden Tax' Clock** – Modeled after the National Debt Clock, the 'Hidden Tax' clock would tally the additional dollars families pay to subsidize the uncompensated health care costs of the uninsured (approximately \$43 billion overall per year).