

HEALTH CARE

The Partnership recognizes that overall health and wellness for consumers is crucial for our society and business climate. As such, The Partnership endorses a health care agenda that supports health care providers, educators and organizations that comprise a large and important part of Iowa's economy. The Partnership strives to support the entire region with a health care agenda and this presents additional challenges, including financial and access issues to those in more rural settings. In addition, The Partnership further recognizes the ever-increasing cost of health care for businesses and supports efforts to reduce the overall cost while maintaining a strong and vibrant health care system that meets the needs of employees and consumers.

HEALTH CARE REFORM

Congress and the Administration are considering how to create a viable and functional health insurance market where individuals can buy affordable insurance that meets their needs. As Congress tackles these complex issues, The Partnership believes that sound health care policy that offers affordable options must be based on several principles:

- The Affordable Care Act (ACA), with its strong consumer protections, including prohibitions on preexisting condition exclusions, no annual or lifetime dollar limits on coverage and allowing young adults to stay on parents' health plans until age 26, provides a good option for many Iowans, particularly those who receive federal subsidies to make ACA-compliant plans affordable.
- Individuals who have and like pre-ACA coverage, known as grandfathered and grandmothers plans, can keep it.
- A stable and broad insurance pool is essential for the long-term viability of the health insurance market. Congress and the Administration must adopt strong incentives for continuous coverage so that people do not buy health insurance only when there is an illness.
- The government must provide a reasonable level of premium assistance for people who cannot afford health care. Premium assistance and insurance rating rules must be designed to ensure that young and healthy people participate in the insurance market.
- Because the costs for serious medical conditions are growing rapidly, a relatively small number of severely sick people significantly drive up premium costs for everyone. Programs such as high-risk pools or reinsurance help address these catastrophic costs and lower premiums.
- States should return to the traditional role of being the primary regulators of the health insurance market.

2018 FEDERAL POLICY AGENDA

- States need increased flexibility to drive innovation that allows people to purchase health coverage they want and can afford, subject to oversight by state legislatures and regulators.

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

The Partnership appreciates the priority expressed by our congressional leaders for innovative solutions to our increasing mental health needs as a community.

The Partnership supports legislation to expand programs and funding for mental health services, especially those that are community-based, to ensure access to coordinated, holistic care. The Partnership further supports action to improve mental health services and ensure parity within the Medicaid and Medicare programs by enacting critical reforms to allow for same-day and same-location mental health and primary care services and to repeal the current Medicaid exclusion on inpatient psychiatric care for certain individuals. Additionally, The Partnership supports efforts to strengthen mental health parity and provide incentives to states to help integrate mental and physical health services.

PUBLIC HEALTH INITIATIVES

The Partnership recognizes the unique role that public health plays in community and economic development efforts. Therefore, The Partnership supports the establishment of a free immunization program for uninsured adults, along the lines of CDC's Vaccine for Children Program. Additionally, The Partnership supports evidence-based policies and initiatives to decrease the misuse of opioids and improve access to effective treatment to those addicted.

HEALTH CARE WORKFORCE

The Partnership supports expanded funding for federal programs supporting Graduate Medical Education (GME), including both Direct GME and Indirect Medical Education payments. The Partnership further supports resources to be made available to allow Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services to consider exceptions for funding GME positions beyond the cap in areas with demonstrable physician shortages for particular specialties, e.g. Psychiatry, Primary Care Specialties, OB/GYN and General Surgery.

MEDICAID

Medicaid expansion has provided thousands of lower income Iowans with access to health care. Congress should carefully consider changes to the Medicaid program to make sure that low-income persons continue to receive coverage.



MEDICARE

The Partnership supports improving fairness and equity in Medicare payments between geographical areas and supports the implementation of new reimbursement models, such as the shared savings program, that reward quality and efficiency, not quantity of services. Specifically, The Partnership supports eliminating the inaccuracies and inequities in the Geographic Practice Cost Index (GPCI) geographic adjusters to Medicare payment for physicians and using contemporary market or actual cost data for physicians.

AFFORDABLE PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

The Partnership urges Congress to explore options to address the continued rapid rise in drug costs. Lowans with high drug costs must sometimes choose between necessary drugs or food or purchasing drugs from other countries. For instance, The Partnership supports the 340B Drug Pricing Program, which requires drug manufacturers to sell outpatient drugs at a discount to safety-net hospitals serving high numbers of low-income Medicare, Medicaid and Supplemental Social Security Insurance Patients.

PALLIATIVE CARE AND HOSPICE EDUCATION AND TRAINING ACT

The Partnership supports expanding access to palliative care. Palliative care is specialized medical care that improves quality of life for patients and families by focusing on relief from pain, stress and other symptoms of treatment for serious diseases. It is appropriate at any age and any stage and can be provided alongside curative treatment. It is delivered by trained specialists who work together with doctors and nurses in a team-based approach that focuses on the patients' needs, explains treatment options and gives patients and families a voice in realizing treatment goals. However, awareness of and access to palliative care services remains a significant barrier for many lowans. The Partnership supports the Palliative Care and Hospice Education and Training Act (PCHETA) as it aims to put a needed spotlight on palliative care by:

- Developing an educational campaign for the public and health care providers.
- Establishing palliative care workforce training programs for doctors, nurses and other health professionals.
- Enhancing research in palliative care.

VETERANS ACCESS, CHOICE AND ACCOUNTABILITY ACT

2018 FEDERAL POLICY AGENDA

The Partnership supports the Veterans Access, Choice and Accountability Act (VACAA) to expand the Veterans Administration residency program allowing cross training of residents within other area hospitals to expand knowledge base and exposure to all modalities of medicine.