
Expanding Access, Reducing Costs, Improving Quality

An Act to Improve Health Access and Affordability

Lead Sponsors: Senator Richard Moore and Representative Deborah Blumer

The Problem

Because of growing health care costs, people are losing their health coverage and access to health insurance. This is leading to a greater number of uninsured people, especially among working families. Also, doctors and hospitals are forced to raise their rates to make up for low payments by the state, which then causes private health premiums to rise.

Plan for Reform

The Health Access and Affordability Act expands access to affordable coverage, controls growth in health care costs and improves quality for everyone.

The Act expands access to affordable coverage by:

- Guaranteeing coverage for low-income individuals and families through MassHealth or by helping with payments for health insurance purchased through employers.
- Providing assistance to middle income, working individuals and families to purchase insurance.
- Requiring employers to either provide health coverage or pay a fee to the state. Companies already providing insurance will not have to pay anything to the state.
- Covering catastrophic health costs for individuals and small businesses, which will lower premiums.
- Offering assistance to small businesses to help them pay the premiums for their employees.

The Act reduces health care costs by:

- Setting fair MassHealth rates for doctors and hospitals that are based on costs and encourage high-quality care.
- Reducing use of more expensive services, like emergency rooms.

The Act improves the quality of health care by:

- Organizing a state board to set annual quality improvement and cost reduction goals.
- Establishing a community health worker program, particularly in minority and underserved communities.

To do all of this, the Act will use money currently spent on health care by the state and new funds from the federal government, fees, and a 50-cent tax increase on cigarettes.

The Health Access and Affordability Act is supported by an ever-growing, broad coalition of consumers, patients, community organizations, businesses, labor unions, doctors, hospitals, health plans, and community health centers (the Health Reform Coalition's Steering Committee members are listed on the reverse side).

Action Steps

We need your help. Please contact your state legislators via the State House switchboard, 617-722-2000, and ask for their support of the Health Access and Affordability Act. To identify your state legislators, please call the Secretary of the Commonwealth's Office, 800-392-6090, and they will help you.

For more information on the legislation and the campaign supporting it, visit our web page: www.hcfama.org/reform.



The Massachusetts Health Reform Coalition Steering Committee

The following organizations are key members of the Coalition's leadership committee:

American Cancer Society
Boston Center for Independent Living
Boston Medical Center
Cambridge Health Alliance
Children's Hospital
Coalition for Social Justice
Families USA
Health Care For All
Home and Health Care Association of Massachusetts
Massachusetts Academy of Family Physicians
Massachusetts AFL-CIO
Massachusetts Business Leaders for Quality, Affordable Health Care
Massachusetts Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics
Massachusetts College of Emergency Physicians
Massachusetts Community Health Worker Network
Massachusetts Council of Community Hospitals
MIRA Coalition
Massachusetts Health Council
Massachusetts Hospital Association
Massachusetts League of Community Health Centers
Massachusetts Medical Society
Neighbor to Neighbor
SEIU 615
SEIU 2020
UMass Memorial Healthcare
Western Mass Health Access Coalition