

**America's Health Insurance Plans (AHIP)**  
*Evidence-based medicine to reform the health care system*

**Organization Description:** AHIP is a national trade association representing approximately 1,300 member companies that provide health benefits to more than 200 million Americans. Serving as a unified voice for the health care financing industry, AHIP's mission is to advocate at the federal and state levels for greater access to high quality, cost-effective care for all Americans.

**Proposal Summary:** AHIP seeks comprehensive and affordable health care coverage for all Americans. Its advocacy efforts aim to expand health coverage incrementally by preserving entitlement programs, broadening eligibility for federally funded programs, and offering tax incentives. AHIP also supports initiatives to empower consumer choice, reduce health care costs and improve the quality of health care services through evidence-based standards. The following policy positions were included in AHIP's 2004 and 2006 health reform proposals. In addition to their own proposal, AHIP has joined the Health Coverage Coalition for the Uninsured (HCCU)<sup>1</sup> to promote principles to reform the U.S. health care system.

- **Coverage:** AHIP supports expanding funding for the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) to ensure coverage of all children in families with incomes under 200% of the federal poverty level (FPL). It also recommends expanding Medicaid eligibility for all adults with incomes under 100% FPL. It proposes creating a Universal Health Account that enables consumers to purchase health insurance and pay for qualified medical expenses with pre-tax dollars. It would provide an additional \$500 health tax credit to the existing children's tax credit for individuals and families that secure health insurance for their children. AHIP also supports creating high-risk purchasing pools to cover uninsured individuals with high health costs. It would also establish a federal performance grant program providing up to \$50 billion in additional funding over 10 years to states that implement coverage initiatives for low-income residents.

HCCU's proposal initially aims to remove barriers for children to enroll in established public programs. The plan would also give tax credits to families to help offset the cost of purchasing health insurance for all children. The second phase of the initiative concentrates on expanding Medicaid eligibility to cover all adults with incomes below the federal poverty level. For those with higher incomes, HCCU recommends establishing a refundable tax credit to help cover the cost of private insurance.

- **Wellness and Prevention:** AHIP supports expanding health promotion and wellness programs and preventive health care services, particularly disease management programs.
- **Quality:** AHIP recommends establishing evidence-based standards to improve the quality of care. Promote uniform adoption of effective health care practices. Expand funding for comparative clinical effectiveness research on prescription drugs, medical devices and surgeries. Improve the health technology assessment process. Empower consumer choice through greater price transparency and quality reporting. Provide readily available comprehensive, consumer-friendly information about the safety, effectiveness and value of drugs, devices, procedures and other technologies.

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<sup>1</sup> The HCCU is comprised of sixteen national organizations that play leading roles in every aspect of federal health policy, including health plans, provider groups, advocacy organizations, a business alliance, and a pharmaceutical manufacturer.

- *Cost:* Develop innovative approaches to liability reform such as allowing evidence-based medicine standards to be admissible in judicial and administrative proceedings. Expand performance-based programs that reimburse providers for meeting quality goals. Reward enrollees for making healthy lifestyle choices. Establish independent commissions to conduct cost-benefit analyses of proposed health care mandates. HCCU would fund its proposal through the expansion of public programs and refundable tax credits for individuals.
- *Other:* Enforce antitrust laws to ensure health care markets remain competitive. Reform the regulatory framework to have greater uniformity among overlapping state and federal requirements.

**Proposal Date:** 2004 – 2007

Sources: *We Believe Every American Should Have Access to Affordable Health Care Coverage: A Vision for Reform*, <http://www.ahip.org/content/fileviewer.aspx?docid=18061&linkid=154967>; *A Commitment to Improve Health Care Quality, Access, and Affordability*, <http://www.ahip.org/content/default.aspx?bc=39|343|428>; HCCU: *Press Release*, 2007, [http://www.coalitionfortheuninsured.org/news/pressrelease\\_20070118.html](http://www.coalitionfortheuninsured.org/news/pressrelease_20070118.html).