

## **Service Employees International Union (SEIU)**

*Subsidized health insurance to provide affordable coverage for small business employees*

**Organization Description:** SEIU is focused on uniting workers in four sectors: hospital systems, long-term care, property services, and public services. Representing 1.8 million members in the United States, Canada, and Puerto Rico, SEIU is the nation's largest health care and property services union, and the second-largest public employees union. Its mission is to improve the lives of workers and the services they provide by advocating for higher wages, better benefits, and improved working conditions.

**Proposal Summary:** SEIU advocates for high quality, affordable health care for all Americans through its Americans for Health Care project. Its efforts seek to expand health coverage incrementally by broadening eligibility for federally funded programs and by creating mechanisms for small businesses to purchase health insurance. SEIU supports initiatives to improve quality of care and reduce prescription drug costs. The following policy priorities are included in SEIU's 2006 health reform proposal.

- **Coverage:** SEIU supports expanding access to care by increasing eligibility for Medicaid and the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP). It recommends allowing small businesses to enroll their workers in the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program. SEIU supports creating state-based risk pools so that small businesses can buy into a program offering comprehensive coverage at affordable prices. It supports extending COBRA coverage to individuals who work for companies employing less than 25 people. SEIU supports requiring large employers to provide health coverage for their employees. It would also increase Medicaid reimbursement rates to improve beneficiary access to physicians and offer provider incentives to improve access to primary care in underserved areas.
- **Wellness and Prevention:** SEIU supports reimbursing providers for implementing disease management that relies on peer reviewed and evidence-based procedures and utilize quantitative measures for evaluation.
- **Care Coordination:** SEIU recommends giving grants to states to increase care management and coordination.
- **Quality:** SEIU seeks to expand state flexibility to determine eligibility for home and community-based services without a waiver. It also supports reducing medical errors by establishing safe patient-to-staff ratios in hospitals. Lastly, it advocates to integrate translation services into hospital settings.
- **Cost:** SEIU supports reducing prescription drug costs by establishing fair pricing legislation that permits states to leverage their purchasing power to negotiate directly with manufacturers. SEIU recommends replacing the Average Wholesale Price (AWP) pharmaceutical reimbursement model with a more rational one such as Average Manufacturers Price (AMP). SEIU would eliminate Medicare overpayments to Medicare Advantage plans. It also seeks to improve fraud, waste, and abuse prevention efforts in Medicaid.

**Proposal Date:** 2006

Source: American's for Health Care, <http://www.americansforhealthcare.org/>; *First Do No Harm: A Prescription for Strengthening Medicaid and Protecting the Long Term Care Safety Net*; <http://www.seiu.org/docUploads/FDNLH%20Policy%20Paper%20-%20FINAL.doc>.