

The Committee on Governance Corner

Health Care and the 2008 Elections

Election season is in full swing, and health care reform stands to be an important issue. The American Hospital Association is actively working to communicate hospitals' message far and wide this election cycle. To that end, the AHA has prepared a document containing four questions to help you engage candidates on the health care issues that are critical to the future of patients, hospitals and communities.

First, coverage for all Americans ... the AHA is part of the Health Coverage Coalition for the Uninsured, a diverse group of organizations that have set aside their political differences to identify a bipartisan way to get health coverage to the millions of Americans who need it. Coverage for all is also a central pillar of *Health for Life*, AHA's framework for health reform. As you meet candidates, ask them: If elected, what steps would you take to provide health coverage for all Americans?

Second, improving health and health care ... America has what it takes to offer the best in health care – cutting-edge technology, highly trained practitioners, care provided around the clock. But our efforts too often fall short because health care coverage remains unaffordable for many. More can and must be done. Ask candidates: If elected, what will you do to improve health and health care in America?

Third, working for change ... the only path to a better future for America's health and health care is through a deliberate bipartisan process, where multiple views can be expressed, debated, refined and brought to action. Ask candidates: If elected, how would you work to achieve change in a bipartisan manner?

Finally, the demands on America's hospitals ... Medicare and Medicaid, which together cover nearly 100 million Americans, pay less than the cost of providing that care – 91 cents and 86 cents on the dollar respectively – resulting in a \$30 billion shortfall. Ask candidates: What will you do to make sure America's hospitals have the resources to meet their communities' needs?

This important tool and others are available from the 2008 Election Center on www.aha.org. Visit it today and make your voice heard!

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