

Seven Steps to a Healthier America



The health system in the United States is a patchwork quilt, mended together over time to address disparate needs. It is a mix of private interest and government involvement at the federal, state and local levels. What is missing is a shared vision of the desired future of our health care system and broad-based support for that vision. Change is critical and the time to create the environment for change is now.

The following principles are the building blocks of a health care system that should provide affordable coverage for everyone's basic health care needs, that should provide care equitably to all, and that should be sufficiently financed to meet long-term needs and responsibilities. Much work needs to be done to change our current system, but these principles can begin that process.

SEVEN STEPS TO A HEALTHIER AMERICA

- 1. No child should be without health care:** America must commit to a health care system that guarantees health insurance coverage by 2008 for every child under the age of 18.
- 2. No American should become impoverished due to a major illness or injury:** America must commit to providing catastrophic health insurance coverage for all who face a significant health crisis.
- 3. Every American deserves access to emergency medical services regardless of ability to pay:** America must commit to guaranteed government funding of hospital emergency room and trauma care, ensuring access to anyone requiring emergency medical care and women in active labor.
- 4. Poor and older Americans must be ensured continued access to high quality hospital care:** America must commit to adequate Medicare and Medicaid reimbursement for hospitals, physicians, and other providers and Congress must not reduce Medicare or Medicaid spending to reduce the federal deficit.
- 5. Remove barriers to coordinating health care for all Americans, especially the chronically ill:** America must commit to providing coverage for case management and other chronic care management services under all forms of insurance, not just managed care, and in doing so, reduce the duplication and inefficiencies in care delivery.
- 6. All Americans deserve high quality health care:** America must commit to supporting public and private partnerships for performance improvement and investing in information technologies that improve quality of care.
- 7. Every American should have access to important preventive care:** America must commit to ensuring that critical preventive services are available for every child and every adult through public and private sector initiatives.