



## 2008 Presidential Candidate Health Care Proposals: Side-by-Side Summary

The side-by-side comparison below focuses on important health care issues not necessarily addressed in the candidates' health care reform proposals. It was prepared by the Kaiser Family Foundation with the assistance of Health Policy Alternatives, Inc. The comparisons are based on information compiled from the candidates' Web sites, speeches and campaign debates.

### John McCain

#### BIOMEDICAL RESEARCH

##### Biomedical Research in General

- Supports dedicating more federal research funds into caring for and curing chronic disease.
- Supports appointing a panel of experts to recommend research funding priorities to Congress.
- With respect to cancer research, would "make sure that our researchers have necessary funding to defeat cancer once and for all", and would work to coordinate public and private research efforts, including the National Cancer Institute and National Institutes of Health, especially with a focus on translating laboratory discoveries into treatment.

##### Stem Cell Research

- Supports expanded federal funding for embryonic stem cell research, using stem cells derived from embryos produced for in vitro fertilization that would otherwise be discarded or unused, subject to strict federal guidelines.
- Opposes the intentional creation of human embryos for research purposes. Would make it a federal crime for researchers to use cells or fetal tissue from an embryo created for research purposes. Would ban attempts to use or obtain human cells gestated in animals.
- Indicates strong support for funding adult stem cell research.

#### CARE COORDINATION AND PREVENTION

##### Disease Management/Care Coordination

- Advocates that payers pay a single bill for high-quality disease care which will make providers accountable and responsive to patients' needs.
- Would focus efforts on the five chronic diseases that account for 75% of health care costs.

##### Prevention

- Advocates working with businesses and insurance companies to promote the availability of smoking cessation programs.
- Supports federally funded research aimed at chronic illnesses that are preventable.
- Believes individuals should do everything possible to prevent expensive, chronic diseases, and that parents have a moral obligation to educate their children on healthy lifestyles.

#### HEALTH CARE REFORM

##### General Approach

- Remove the favorable tax treatment of employer-sponsored insurance and provide a tax credit to all individuals and families to increase incentives for insurance coverage; promote insurance competition; and contain costs through payment changes to providers, tort reform and other measures.

A detailed comparison of the candidates' health reform plans is available at <http://www.health08.org/sidebyside.cfm>.

## Improving Coverage

- Reform the tax code to eliminate the exclusion of the value of health insurance plans offered by employers from workers' taxable income.
- Provide a refundable tax credit of up to \$2,500 (individuals) and \$5,000 (families) to all individuals and families for the purchase of insurance.
- Work with states to create a federally-supported Guaranteed Access Plan for people who are denied coverage due to pre-existing conditions.
- Promote competition and individual choice of insurance by allowing insurance to be sold across state lines.

## Cost Containment and Quality Improvement

- Promote deployment of HIT.
- Invest in prevention and care of chronic illnesses.
- Allow reimportation of drugs, encourage faster introduction of generics and require drug companies to reveal the price of their drugs.
- Change provider payment to encourage coordinated care and pay only for quality.
- Provide consumers with more information on treatment options and require provider transparency regarding costs, prices and medical outcomes.
- Adopt malpractice reforms.

## HEALTH INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

### Health Information Technology (HIT)

- Supports the rapid deployment of 21st century information systems and technology that will allow doctors to practice across state lines.
- Believes if the system demands information on outcomes, then the market will respond to provide the HIT infrastructure.

## HIV/AIDS/GLOBAL HEALTH

### HIV/AIDS

#### Domestic

- Supports the development of a national AIDS strategy with input from government officials, doctors, drug companies, and AIDS advocates.

#### Global

- Supports U.S. global AIDS efforts; supported the reauthorization of the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief.

More information on the candidate's position on HIV/AIDS/Global Health is available at

[http://www.health08.org/issue\\_globalhealth\\_hiv aids.cfm](http://www.health08.org/issue_globalhealth_hiv aids.cfm)

### Global Health

- Would call for the formation of a new international organization, the "League of Democracies," to link democratic nations together, and to address challenges including HIV/AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa.
- Would establish a goal of eradicating malaria in Africa.

## LONG-TERM CARE

### General Approach

- Supports a variety of state-based programs for delivering care to people in a home setting, such as the Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE) and Cash and Counseling, as provided in the Arizona Medicaid program.
- Would take steps to provide individuals monthly stipends to hire care providers and purchase care-related services and goods.

### Long-Term Care Insurance

- Campaign has not addressed.

## MEDICAID/STATE CHILDREN'S HEALTH INSURANCE PROGRAM (SCHIP)

### General Approach

- Would provide states with flexibility to experiment and find solutions that work and would allow increased private sector insurance options in Medicaid/SCHIP.

### Eligibility and Enrollment

- Advocates focusing on currently eligible SCHIP children who are not enrolled and expanding only to low-income uninsured children not eligible for SCHIP under current policy. Opposes expansion of SCHIP to children in higher income families and to adults.

### Benefits

- Advocates allowing states to use Medicaid and SCHIP funds for private insurance.

### Quality and Provider Payment

- Supports reforming the payment systems in Medicaid to compensate providers for diagnosis, prevention and care coordination.
- Believes Medicaid should not pay for preventable medical errors or mismanagement.

### Financing

- Opposes the use of a tobacco tax to fund SCHIP and would instead fund out of general revenues.

### State Flexibility

- Believes States should have the flexibility to experiment with alternative forms of access, coordinated payments per episode covered under Medicaid, use of private insurance in Medicaid, alternative insurance policies and different licensing schemes for providers.

### Medicaid Fraud

- Advocates a zero tolerance policy towards Medicaid fraud.

## MEDICAL MALPRACTICE

### Medical Malpractice

- Supports tort reform to eliminate excessive damage awards and frivolous lawsuits.
- Supports providing a "safe harbor" to physicians who follow clinical guidelines and patient safety protocols while assuring access to legal remedies in the case of bad medical practice.

## MEDICARE

### General Approach

- Would address the long-term financial issues of the program and reform payment systems to provide incentives to improve quality and efficiency and reduce costs.

### Financial Solvency

- Supports the establishment of a commission to make recommendations for long-term program sustainability.

### Provider Payment Reform

- Advocates reform of the payment system to compensate providers for diagnosis, prevention and care coordination.
- Would make a single bundled payment for all services related to a patient's disease instead of paying a separate fee for each service.
- Believes Medicare should not pay for services resulting in or related to preventable errors or mismanagement.

### Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage

- Would require higher income Medicare beneficiaries to pay higher monthly Part D premiums.
- Supports adding requirement to Medicare that pharmaceutical companies compete against each other to provide prescription drugs for needy seniors as under the VA system.

Medicare Advantage (MA)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Supports gradually equalizing Medicare Advantage payments in the context of comprehensive reform.</li></ul>
Medicare Fraud
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Advocates a zero tolerance policy towards Medicare fraud.</li></ul>
MENTAL HEALTH PARITY
Mental Health Parity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Believes that mental health is a necessary complement to physical health in all aspects of daily life. Where possible, there should be incentives to treat physical and behavioral health together.</li><li>• Supports housing programs for seriously mentally ill veterans.</li><li>• Supports coverage of mental health care in military retiree health plans.</li></ul>
PRESCRIPTION DRUGS
Reimportation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Would allow reimportation of prescription drugs if the drugs are safe.</li></ul>
Generic Drugs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Supports fostering the development of routes for safer, cheaper generic versions of drugs and biological pharmaceuticals.</li></ul>
Drug Prices
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Supports adding a requirement to Medicare and Medicaid that pharmaceutical companies compete against each other to provide prescription drugs for needy seniors as under the VA system.</li></ul>
RACIAL AND ETHNIC DISPARITIES
Racial and Ethnic Disparities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Campaign has not addressed.</li></ul>
TRANSPARENCY AND COMPARATIVE EFFECTIVENESS
Transparency
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Supports making more information public on treatment options and the performance and safety records of doctors, and requiring transparency regarding medical outcomes, quality of care, costs and prices.</li><li>• Supports facilitating the development of national standards for measuring and recording treatments and outcomes.</li></ul>
Comparative Effectiveness
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Supports comparative effectiveness but believes it should be a private sector driven exercise, not controlled through a centralized government process.</li></ul>

## VETERANS' HEALTH ISSUES

### Funding for Veterans' Health Care

- Would ensure that health care funding is distributed fairly, and that eligible veterans in all regions of the country can equally access high quality health care.

### Veterans' Access to Health Care

- Would provide each veteran with a "Veterans Care Access Card" that gives a veteran with an injury or illness incurred during military service the option to get free treatment at a local private hospital if Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) services are not available because of distance or lack of specialty.
- Would hold the VA accountable for reducing waiting times for treatment.
- Supports measures to allow veterans in remote areas of Alaska to get care at existing facilities run by the Indian Health Service or tribal organizations.
- Supports a demonstration project to send mobile health centers to remote locations where veterans need care.

### Special Health Care Needs of Veterans

- Supports housing programs for seriously mentally ill veterans.
- Would ensure that veterans receive health care that reflects their unique needs.
- Supports guaranteeing health benefits to veterans who have been exposed to radiation.
- Would advance studies on the health effects of exposure to Agent Orange and give disability benefits to veterans with cancer and other health problems caused by Agent Orange.
- Supports efforts to provide veterans with treatment for tobacco related illnesses and substance abuse problems.
- Supports providing veterans with hospice benefits.
- Supports allowing disabled veterans to be enrolled in the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program.
- Would increase VA resources for paralysis research.

### Health Care for Retired Veterans

- Believes that all military retirees, even those not eligible for VA health care, should be provided with meaningful access to health care and that the federal government should ease the burden of their health care costs.
- Supports allowing military retirees to remain eligible for CHAMPUS or TRICARE military health care programs even when they reach the age of 65 and are eligible for Medicare.
- Supports efforts to give military retirees tax breaks to help pay health insurance premiums, and opposes placing user fees on military retirees for using military medical facilities.
- Supports coverage of mental health care in military retiree health plans.

## WOMEN'S HEALTH

### Reproductive Health

#### Contraception

- Campaign has not addressed.

#### Abortion

- Advocates Roe v. Wade be overturned and the issue returned to the states.
- Supports government actions to empower and strengthen pro-life organizations and efforts.
- Supports a complete ban on "partial-birth" abortions.

#### International Issues

- Campaign has not addressed.

#### Sex Education

- Campaign has not addressed.

#### Adoption

- Would promote adoption as a first option in crisis pregnancies

## Women's Health Research

- Campaign has not addressed.

## Caregiving and Leave Policies

- Would not expand the Family and Medical Leave Act.
- Believes that sick days should be negotiated between management and labor.
- Would consider tax credits or other financial incentives to assist family caregivers.

## SOURCE

### Biomedical Research

[http://www.kaisernetwork.org/health\\_cast/health2008hc.cfm?hc=2161](http://www.kaisernetwork.org/health_cast/health2008hc.cfm?hc=2161)  
<http://www.johnmccain.com/Informing/Issues/95b18512-d5b6-456e-90a2-12028d71df58.htm>  
<http://www.johnmccain.com/Informing/Issues/19ba2f1c-c03f-4ac2-8cd5-5cf2edb527cf.htm>  
[http://www.kaisernetwork.org/health\\_cast/health2008hc.cfm?hc=2606](http://www.kaisernetwork.org/health_cast/health2008hc.cfm?hc=2606)  
[http://www.kaisernetwork.org/health\\_cast/health2008hc.cfm?hc=2596](http://www.kaisernetwork.org/health_cast/health2008hc.cfm?hc=2596)  
<http://www.johnmccain.com/issues/healthcare/fc.htm>

### Care Coordination and Prevention

<http://www.johnmccain.com/Informing/Issues/19ba2f1c-c03f-4ac2-8cd5-5cf2edb527cf.htm>  
<http://www.johnmccain.com/Informing/News/Speeches/8F5FEBD6-CDCA-4136-B0D8-A97F5287235D.htm>  
[http://www.kaisernetwork.org/health\\_cast/health2008hc.cfm?hc=2587](http://www.kaisernetwork.org/health_cast/health2008hc.cfm?hc=2587)

### Health Care Reform

For a more detailed comparison of the candidate's health reform proposals, please visit the health reform side by side here: <http://www.health08.org/sidebyside.cfm>

<http://www.johnmccain.com/Informing/Issues/19ba2f1c-c03f-4ac2-8cd5-5cf2edb527cf.htm>

### Health Information Technology

<http://www.johnmccain.com/Informing/Issues/19ba2f1c-c03f-4ac2-8cd5-5cf2edb527cf.htm>  
<http://www.johnmccain.com/Informing/News/Speeches/8F5FEBD6-CDCA-4136-B0D8-A97F5287235D.htm>  
[http://www.kaisernetwork.org/health\\_cast/health2008hc.cfm?hc=2587](http://www.kaisernetwork.org/health_cast/health2008hc.cfm?hc=2587)

### HIV/AIDS

<http://www.johnmccain.com/Informing/News/PressReleases/5f76abb5-e7c4-4862-a022-cf200778de95.htm>  
<http://www.johnmccain.com/Informing/News/PressReleases/bfcf096e-e9be-453f-b6b6-49cdee396a74.htm>

### Long-Term Care

<http://www.johnmccain.com/Informing/Issues/19ba2f1c-c03f-4ac2-8cd5-5cf2edb527cf.htm>

### Medicaid/State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP)

<http://www.johnmccain.com/Informing/Issues/19ba2f1c-c03f-4ac2-8cd5-5cf2edb527cf.htm>  
[http://www.kaisernetwork.org/health\\_cast/uploaded\\_files/103107\\_presforum\\_mccain\\_transcript.pdf](http://www.kaisernetwork.org/health_cast/uploaded_files/103107_presforum_mccain_transcript.pdf)  
<http://www.johnmccain.com/downloads/jobsforamerica.pdf>  
[http://www.kaisernetwork.org/health\\_cast/health2008hc.cfm?hc=2596](http://www.kaisernetwork.org/health_cast/health2008hc.cfm?hc=2596)

### Medical Malpractice

<http://www.johnmccain.com/Informing/Issues/19ba2f1c-c03f-4ac2-8cd5-5cf2edb527cf.htm>  
<http://blog.4president.org/2008/2007/10/john-mccain-unv.html>

## Medicare

<http://www.johnmccain.com/Informing/Issues/19ba2f1c-c03f-4ac2-8cd5-5cf2edb527cf.htm>  
[http://www.kaisernetwork.org/health\\_cast/uploaded\\_files/103107\\_presforum\\_mccain\\_transcript.pdf](http://www.kaisernetwork.org/health_cast/uploaded_files/103107_presforum_mccain_transcript.pdf) (pg. 29)  
<http://www.johnmccain.com/downloads/jobsforamerica.pdf>  
<http://blogs.usatoday.com/onpolitics/2008/05/mccain-advise-1.html> (Douglas Holtz-Eakin)  
[http://www.kaisernetwork.org/health\\_cast/uploaded\\_files/103107\\_presforum\\_mccain\\_transcript.pdf](http://www.kaisernetwork.org/health_cast/uploaded_files/103107_presforum_mccain_transcript.pdf) (pg. 41)  
<http://www.cqpolitics.com/wmspage.cfm?docID=news-000002976416>

## Mental Health Parity

[http://www.nami.org/Template.cfm?Section=2008\\_Primarys\\_and\\_Elections&Template=/ContentManagement/ContentDisplay.cfm&ContentID=66252](http://www.nami.org/Template.cfm?Section=2008_Primarys_and_Elections&Template=/ContentManagement/ContentDisplay.cfm&ContentID=66252)  
<http://www.johnmccain.com/Informing/Issues/9cb5d2aa-f237-464e-9cdf-a5ad32771b9f.htm>

## Prescription Drugs

<http://www.johnmccain.com/Informing/Issues/19ba2f1c-c03f-4ac2-8cd5-5cf2edb527cf.htm>  
[http://www.kaisernetwork.org/health\\_cast/uploaded\\_files/103107\\_h08\\_mccain\\_transcript.pdf](http://www.kaisernetwork.org/health_cast/uploaded_files/103107_h08_mccain_transcript.pdf)  
[http://www.nytimes.com/2008/01/05/us/politics/05text-rdebate.html?\\_r=1&pagewanted=all&oref=slogin](http://www.nytimes.com/2008/01/05/us/politics/05text-rdebate.html?_r=1&pagewanted=all&oref=slogin)  
[http://www.kaisernetwork.org/health\\_cast/uploaded\\_files/042408\\_h08\\_nfib\\_transcript.pdf](http://www.kaisernetwork.org/health_cast/uploaded_files/042408_h08_nfib_transcript.pdf)

## Transparency and Comparative Effectiveness

<http://www.johnmccain.com/Informing/Issues/19ba2f1c-c03f-4ac2-8cd5-5cf2edb527cf.htm>  
<http://www.johnmccain.com/Informing/News/Speeches/8F5FEBD6-CDCA-4136-B0D8-A97F5287235D.htm>  
[http://www.kaisernetwork.org/health\\_cast/health2008hc.cfm?hc=2587](http://www.kaisernetwork.org/health_cast/health2008hc.cfm?hc=2587)

## Veteran's Health

<http://www.johnmccain.com/Informing/Issues/9cb5d2aa-f237-464e-9cdf-a5ad32771b9f.htm>  
[http://www.kaisernetwork.org/daily\\_reports/health2008dr.cfm?DR\\_ID=53939](http://www.kaisernetwork.org/daily_reports/health2008dr.cfm?DR_ID=53939)  
<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=93995077>

## Women's Health

<http://www.johnmccain.com/Informing/Issues/19ba2f1c-c03f-4ac2-8cd5-5cf2edb527cf.htm>  
<http://blogs.wsj.com/washwire/2008/07/17/mccain-speaks-out-against-abortion/>  
<http://www.leftinalabama.com/showDiary.do?diaryId=2112>  
<http://newoldage.blogs.nytimes.com/2008/08/25/long-term-care-obama-vs-mccain/>

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