



## Getting the Facts Straight: Dispelling Myths

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**MYTH: United States Does Not Need Health Care Overhaul.** [Some conservatives](#) have contended that there is no need for a complete overhaul of the nation's health care system and that [smaller scale reforms](#) would be better in the long run.

**REALITY: America is Facing a Mounting Health Care Crisis and the Cost of Doing Nothing is Far Too High.** Experts have estimated that if nothing is done, at least [6.9 million](#) more Americans will be uninsured in 2010. Every week we fail to enact comprehensive health reform, [44,230](#) more Americans lose their health insurance. By 2019, average family premiums will skyrocket from [\\$13,150 to \\$22,440](#).

**MYTH: If Health Care Reforms Are Passed, Americans Will Lose Their Current Insurance.** Republicans have [repeatedly argued](#) that under proposed Democratic reforms, many Americans will be forced out of the health insurance that they like and want to keep.

**REALITY: Americans Will Be Able to Keep Their Insurance And All Americans Will Have Access To Quality, Affordable Coverage.** Under the House health insurance reform bill, Americans who currently have private insurance will be able to [keep it](#). The [CBO has estimated](#) that employers will continue offering quality coverage to their employees and that the number of people covered by their employers would actually increase.

**MYTH: Health Care Reform Will Put America on the Path to Socialized Medicine and Put Private Insurers Out of Business.** Throughout the health care reform debate, Republicans have argued that current legislation would put America on the [path to socialism](#) and result in the [end of private insurance](#). Rep. Paul Ryan [argued](#) that the public option was inherently designed to force private insurance out of the market.

**REALITY: A Strong Public Plan Will Not Force Out Private Insurers and Will Provide Much Needed Choice and Competition and a Monopolized Market.** The [nonpartisan CBO](#) asserted that a public plan "could coexist with private insurers without driving them out of business." The CBO has also predicted that the number of Americans in private insurance plans will actually increase under the bill. [Studies and analyses have shown](#) that the most efficient and effective private plans will thrive under health reform proposals, producing lower costs and better health care choices for Americans. In addition, the severe lack of competition in the private market cries out for a public plan to drive down costs and ensure choices for America's patients. [American Medical Association, "Competition in Health Insurance," 2008 Update]

**MYTH: Health Care Reforms Will Lead to the Rationing of Health Care and Put Government Bureaucracy Between You and Your Doctor.** Opponents of reform [argue](#) that a new public health insurance plan will lead to the [rationing of health care](#), waiting lines, and the denial of services.

**REALITY: Comprehensive Health Care Reform Will Help Put an End to Rationing of Health Care By Insurance Companies and Give Americans More Choices and Access, Not Less.** Americans face unfair rationing of their health care by insurance companies, who deny coverage for those with [pre-existing conditions](#) and refuse to cover certain treatments. Companies also [charge higher premiums](#) based on an applicants health status. Insurance companies are also disrupting the doctor-patient relationship. As Diane Archer, director of the Health Care Project at Institute for America's Future [recently argued in the New York Times](#): "As any doctor will tell you, when a private health insurance plan delays or denies a physician-recommended service, it is deciding who gets care and what kind of care people get."

**MYTH: Government Medical Research Will Mean Delay and Denial of Health Care.** Republicans continue to argue that investing in comparative effectiveness research will lead to rationing of care and [denial of certain treatments](#).

**REALITY: Investment in Comparative Effectiveness Research is Necessary to Put the Power Back in the Hands of the Doctors and Their Patients.** Comparative effectiveness research [provides doctors and patients](#) with impartial evidence-based data to help them understand which therapies work and which do not. Currently, [less than half](#) of all medical care is based on evidence supporting the effectiveness of the treatment and [\\$700 billion](#) is wasted each year on tests and procedures that do little or nothing to improve patient outcome. The nonpartisan [Congressional Budget Office has estimated](#) that this type of research has the potential to produce substantial savings over time.

**MYTH: Health Care Reform Will Harm Small Businesses And Result In Job Loss.** Republicans continue to argue that Democratic health care reform legislation would be a "[job-killer](#)" and further exacerbate the current economic crisis. Republicans [also argue](#) that small businesses would suffer greatly under the bills, through the surtax and the employer responsibility requirements.

**REALITY: Comprehensive Health Care Reform Will Help Small Businesses Compete and Prevent Further Job Loss Due To High Health Care Costs.** Studies [have shown](#) that the rapid growth in health care costs has a very negative impact on America's industries, contributing to stunted job growth and productivity. Reforms that help to curb the cost of health care will help to ease these problems in the American work force. The [majority of small businesses](#) will not be affected by the surtax included in the House health care reform bill. The small percentage of those who do have to pay [will not see](#) their business affected. In addition, a substantial number of America's small businesses will [benefit enormously](#) from the tax credits provided for in the legislation. [Studies have shown](#) that a system of employer responsibility can save billions in wages for small business workers and increase profits.

**MYTH: Health Reform Will Drastically Cut Medicare and Harm Health Care of America's Seniors.** [Republicans have accused](#) health care reform advocates of pushing for cuts in Medicare to finance a "massive new government-run" system.

**REALITY: Health Care Reform Will Reduce Waste and Fraud in Medicare, Not Cut Benefits or Coverage For America's Seniors.** [President Obama has repeatedly asserted](#) that any health care reform bill will maintain Medicare benefits, while reducing unnecessary costs.

**MYTH: The House Health Reform Bill Will Encourage Euthanasia Among America's Seniors.** House Minority Leader John Boehner [said](#) a provision in the House health care reform bill would "start us down a treacherous path toward government-encouraged euthanasia if enacted into law." Rep. Virginia Foxx [suggested on the House floor](#) that the House bill would "put seniors in a position of being put to death by their government." Conservative Betsy McCaughey [wrote](#) that both the House and Senate bills would "pressure the elderly to end their lives prematurely."

**REALITY: Democratic Reforms Would Provide Seniors With Valuable Counseling About Complicated Issues.** For her accusations, PolitiFact awarded Betsy McCaughey with a "[Pants on Fire](#)," showing that "the sessions are an option for elderly patients who want to learn more about living wills, health care proxies and other forms of end-of-life planning." AARP Executive Vice President John Rother [called the accusation](#) "a gross, and even cruel, distortion – especially for any family that has been forced to make the difficult decisions on care for loved ones approaching the end of their lives."

**MYTH: Democratic Health Care Reforms Will Force Taxpayers To Subsidize Health Insurance For Illegal Immigrants.** Republicans [have asserted](#) that the current versions of the health care reform bills would benefit illegal immigrants and force Americans to pay for their health care. Rep. Steve King [alleged](#) that over 5 million illegal immigrants would be covered under "Obamacare."

**REALITY: Health Care Reform Legislation Explicitly Exempts Illegal Immigrants From Coverage.** Both the Senate and House health care reform bills [explicitly exclude](#) illegal immigrants from receiving any money from the federal government to obtain health insurance. [One section of the House bill](#) reads, "No Federal Payment for Undocumented Aliens. Nothing in this subtitle shall allow Federal payments for affordability credits on behalf of individuals who are not lawfully present in the United States." In addition, [President Obama](#) has stated that illegal immigrants will not be covered under health care reform.

**MYTH: Democratic Health Care Reforms Will Force Taxpayers To Pay for Abortions.** Health care reform opponents [have asserted](#) that the House and Senate bills "would make abortion more widely available and more common by requiring insurance plans to pay for the procedures and providing government funding to subsidize plans that pay for them."

**REALITY: None of the Bills Currently Being Debated in Congress Mandate Abortion Coverage.** [There is no part](#) of the House or Senate health care reform bills that mandate abortion coverage in the Exchange. The bills do not change any current law that ban the use of federal dollars to pay for low-income women's abortion care. Claims that all private insurance plans will be required to coverage abortion procedures are completely unfounded.

## HEALTHCARE MYTHS BEING PEDDLED BY TOWN HALL PROTESTERS

Disruptive tactics at town hall meetings is only one component of the campaign to derail healthcare reform and preserve that status quo. Opponents of healthcare reform are also spreading myths and outright falsehoods about the legislation currently being considered by Congress. Here are just a few:

**MYTH:** Healthcare reform will put America on the [path to socialized medicine](#). And spell the [end of private insurance](#).

**REALITY:** The [nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office \(CBO\)](#) predicted that the number of Americans in private insurance plans will actually increase under the bill.

**MYTH:** Healthcare reform will encourage euthanasia among America's senior citizens say [House Minority Leader John Boehner \(R-OH\)](#), [Rep. Virginia Foxx \(R-NC\)](#) and [conservative Betsy McCaughey](#).

**REALITY:** AARP Executive Vice President John Rother [called the accusation](#) "a gross, and even cruel, distortion" and PolitiFact awarded Betsy McCaughey with a "[Pants on Fire](#)" award.

**MYTH:** Healthcare reform will [force taxpayers to fund abortions](#).

**REALITY:** [There is no part](#) of the House or Senate health care reform bills that mandate abortion coverage.