

POLICY BRIEFING

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EXPANDING ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE HEALTH CARE

Governor Romney's Plan To Improve America's Health Care System:

Today, In Florida, Governor Mitt Romney Unveiled A Bold Plan To Improve The American Health Care System By Putting Conservative, Market-Based Principles To Work. Governor Romney's health care reform plan is a comprehensive solution to America's health care ills that expands access to affordable, portable, quality, private health insurance. Rather than relying on a one-size-fits-all, government-run system, Governor Romney's plan recognizes the importance of the role of the states in leading reform and the need for innovation in dealing with rising health care costs and the problem of the uninsured.

- **Governor Romney's Plan Facilitates The Growth Of The Private Health Insurance Market.** Governor Romney believes that by expanding and deregulating the private health insurance market, we can decrease costs and ensure that more Americans have access to affordable, portable, quality, private health insurance.
- **Governor Romney Will Preserve The Features Of The American Health Care System That Make It The Envy Of The World.** Rather than deconstructing the system we have today or replacing it with a government-run system that squelches innovation, Governor Romney will "do no harm" by leaving in place the elements of the system that work well while targeting change in the parts of the system that do not.
- **Click Here To View Governor Romney's PowerPoint Presentation:**
http://www.mittromney.com/News/Photo-Albums/Health_Care_Briefing

The Romney Vision: Health Care Reform Goals

Governor Romney Outlined A Health Care Reform Plan That Includes Four Major Goals:

- **First, Instituting Reforms That Make Private Health Insurance Affordable.** More Americans need access to quality, private health insurance. Governor Romney's reforms will make this a reality by bringing down the cost of private health insurance. He will do this by fostering vibrant and competitive health insurance markets in each of the fifty states, reforming the tax code to make it cheaper for individuals to buy private insurance, and helping the low-income uninsured afford the private coverage of their choice.
- **Second, Providing Access To Quality Health Insurance For Every American.** Every American should have access to affordable health insurance. Governor Romney will do this by providing them with premium assistance to purchase private health insurance plans. He will also help middle-income Americans by encouraging state-level health insurance market reforms, which will result in more affordable private coverage.

- **Third, Enhancing The Portability Of Private Health Insurance.** Americans should no longer need to worry about the risk of losing their coverage when, for example, they change jobs. Governor Romney will do this by creating a more robust market for health insurance and helping more Americans get access to affordable insurance.
- **Finally, Slowing The Rate Of Inflation In Health Care Spending.** He will do this by instituting tax reforms that promote "smart" spending on health care, creating incentives for states to reform their health insurance markets, and supporting medical liability reform.

Linking Goals With Action Steps: The Federalist Approach

Governor Romney's Approach To Health Care Reform Is One That Values The States As Laboratories Of Innovation And Beacons Of Creativity. As Governor of Massachusetts, Governor Romney successfully led the effort for comprehensive health care reform, and he recognizes that the federal government must do what it can to facilitate effective change at the state level. His reforms will give states greater flexibility. But Governor Romney's conservative reforms also make the states true partners in the effort to expand access to affordable, quality health insurance.

The Romney Plan: Six Action Steps

Governor Romney Proposed Six Concrete Steps To Reach His Health Care Reform Goals:

- **Step 1: Establish Federal Incentives To Deregulate And Reform State Health Insurance Markets So Market Forces Can Work.** Many Americans can't afford private health insurance because state markets are over-regulated and in serious need of reform. Governor Romney will provide federal incentives for states to deregulate and reform their health insurance markets. This will bring down the cost of health insurance and facilitate greater consumer choice, while giving states the power to institute the reforms that suit them best.
- **Step 2: Redirect Federal Spending On "Free Care" To Help The Low-Income Uninsured Purchase Private Insurance.** Currently, taxpayers subsidize "free care" for millions of uninsured Americans who receive treatment when they need it. Governor Romney will end subsidized care for "free riders" by redirecting these existing federal and state resources to help the low-income uninsured purchase their own private health insurance. States are free to craft their own programs and institute their own eligibility requirements. Most importantly, this can be done without the need for new spending or taxes.
- **Step 3: Institute Health Savings Account (HSA) Enhancements And The Full Deductibility Of Qualified Medical Expenses.** The tax code currently discriminates against those who do not buy their health insurance through an employer and creates incentives for the over-consumption of health care services. Governor Romney will make private insurance more affordable for every American by reforming the tax code. He will expand and grow HSAs. He also supports the full deductibility of qualified medical expenses, which will allow Americans to deduct the cost of their health insurance and out-of-pocket medical expenses, where accompanied by at least catastrophic insurance.
- **Step 4: Promote Innovation In Medicaid.** States have very little flexibility under current law to enact innovative changes to Medicaid that help more of their citizens while containing costs. Governor Romney will encourage innovation by block-granting federal funds to states and removing the burdensome administrative requirements that prevent them from improving the program. This initiative has the added benefit of helping to constrain runaway entitlement spending.
- **Step 5: Implement Medical Liability Reform.** Too many doctors are practicing defensive medicine because of frivolous lawsuits and an out-of-control medical liability system. Governor Romney will implement medical liability reform, including federal caps on non-economic and punitive damage

awards in medical malpractice cases. He will also encourage states to engage in additional medical liability reforms that will both honor the rights of patients and respect the work of physicians.

- **Step 6: Bring Market Dynamics And Modern Technology To Health Care.** Consumers are not empowered in the current system to make intelligent decisions about the purchase of health care and many aspects of the health care system remain technologically backwards. Governor Romney will bring health care into the 21st century by enhancing the use of information technology, establishing cost and quality transparency, encouraging more HSAs and co-insurance products, and calling for more provider options.

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