

Preamble to a First 100 Days Health Agenda

The First 100 Days Health Agenda is offered as a platform for unified action by organizations working to achieve quality, affordable and accessible health care for all Americans. It honors the diverse priorities of the groups that make up the health reform movement and provides opportunities for mutual support. The premise of the Agenda is simple: success is much more likely if we work together.

The Agenda links health reform to the deepening economic crisis by providing, through Medicaid, continuing health coverage for all who receive unemployment compensation. It protects Medicare by eliminating the excess payments to the Medicare Advantage plans and ends the prohibition on government bargaining with the drug companies. It supports the extension of coverage for children and makes a number of suggestions to strengthen and expand Medicaid's supporting role including the urgently needed increase in Federal matching funds to states.

When enacted, the provisions of the Agenda will themselves provide a substantial financial stimulus and relieve serious financial pressures facing individual and families as well as businesses, unions and state and local governments.

The Agenda consists of two parts. The first comprises measures that can be enacted in the First 100 Days and that extend and expand health coverage and access, halt the erosion of traditional Medicare and improve access to affordable medicine. The second part identifies policy and program initiatives that should be launched in this initial period even though they won't be finished in 100 days. These aim to ensure greater health justice for veterans, improve the health of the nation and build the basis for effective, efficient financing and delivery of health care.

We believe that these actions will meet the crushing immediate needs of our country for continuity and expansion of health care coverage during the economic crisis. Taken together, they will set the stage for the more far reaching reforms that must be enacted if we are to have health security for all Americans.

The Agenda will be supplemented from time to time with links to supporting materials. It may also be updated from time to time, so readers are advised to check for updates at <http://www.rekindlingreform.org>.