

OBAMA ON HEALTH CARE



“We need to invest in biomedical research and stem cell research, so that we’re at the leading edge of prevention and treatment. And we need to finally pass universal health care so that every American has access to health insurance that they can afford, and are getting the preventive services that are the key to cutting health care costs. That’s what I pledge to do in my first term as president.” — *Kettering University, Flint, Mich., June 16*

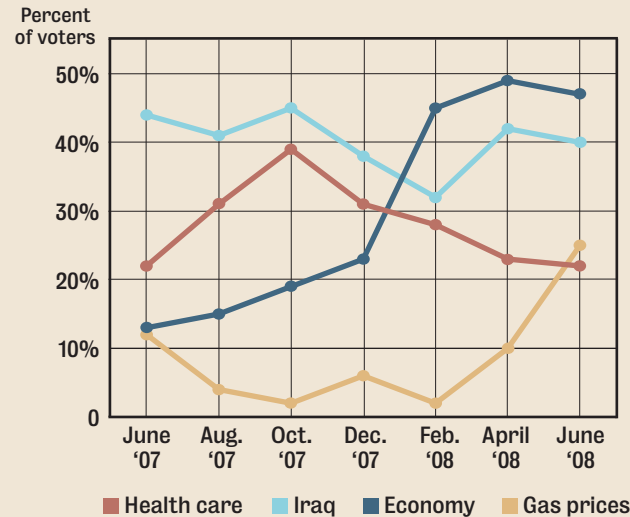
“I think it’s time to finally make health care affordable and accessible for every American. We need to stand up to the insurance companies and the drug companies. We need to bring Americans together. And we need to pass a plan that lowers every family’s premiums and gives every uninsured American the same kind of coverage that members of Congress give themselves.” — *Vernier Software & Technology, Beaverton, Ore., May 9*

“I do not accept that in the richest nation on Earth we have to stand by while 47 million Americans have no health care and millions more are on the verge of bankruptcy because of their medical bills. My mother died of ovarian cancer in the prime of her life, and do you know what she was most worried about in those final months? She was between jobs when she was diagnosed and she wasn’t sure whether insurance would cover her treatment.” — *Veterans Memorial Park, Manchester, N.H., Sept. 3, 2007*

Health care on back burner?

Polls show that several non-health-specific concerns recently overtook health care as the issues voters most want to hear discussed on the campaign trail.

What two issues would you most like to hear the candidates talk about?



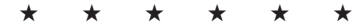
Voters were asked which one of the following health care issues they would most like to hear the candidates talk about:

Making health care and health insurance more affordable	51%
Expanding health insurance coverage for the uninsured	22%
Improving the quality of care and reducing medical errors	10%
Reducing the amount the country spends on health care	7%

Note: Responses do not add up to 100% because not all responses are cited.

SOURCE: KAISER HEALTH TRACKING POLL: ELECTION 2008, JUNE

MCCAIN ON HEALTH CARE



“In addition to strengthening the VA, we should give veterans the option to use a simple plastic card to receive timely and accessible care at a convenient location through a provider of their choosing. I will not stand for requiring veterans to make an appointment to stand in line to make [another] appointment to stand in line for substandard care of the injuries you have suffered to keep our country safe.” — *American GI Forum of the U. S. National Convention, Denver, July 25*

“We’re going to offer every individual and family in America a large tax credit to buy their health care, so that their health insurance is theirs to keep even when they move or change jobs. My plan would allow those who want to stick with employer-provided health insurance to do so. But I want to give individuals greater choice rather than give small business no choice at all.” — *National Federation of Independent Businesses & eBay National Small Business Summit, Washington, D.C., June 10*

“There are those who are convinced that the solution is to move closer to a nationalized health care system. They urge universal coverage, with all the tax increases, new mandates and government regulation that come along with that idea. But in the end, this will accomplish one thing only. We will replace the inefficiency, irrationality and uncontrolled costs of the current system with the inefficiency, irrationality and uncontrolled costs of a government monopoly.” — *Lee Moffitt Cancer Center & Research Institute, University of South Florida, April 29*

How they voted

Medicare Improvements for Patients and Providers Act of 2008

Reversed a 10.6% cut in physician pay that took effect on July 1. Implements a 1.1% raise in January 2009.

Senate vote: Adopted 69-30 on July 9. Overrode President Bush's veto 70-26 on July 15.

McCain: Not voting. Released statement opposing bill.

Obama: Yea on July 9. Not voting on July 15.

Children's Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act of 2007

Proposed a five-year, \$60 billion SCHIP reauthorization that would have covered 3 million additional children and increased federal tobacco taxes.

Senate vote: Adopted 67-29 on Sept. 27, 2007. Bush's veto sustained by the House.

McCain: Not voting. Released statement opposing bill.

Obama: Not voting. Released statement supporting bill.

Tax Relief and Health Care Act of 2006

Prevented a 5% Medicare physician pay cut scheduled for Jan. 1, 2007, by freezing base Medicare pay at 2006 levels. Instituted a 1.5% bonus for physicians who report certain quality measures.

Senate vote: Adopted 79-9 on Dec. 9, 2006.

McCain: Not voting. No statement issued.

Obama: Yea.

Deficit Reduction Act of 2005

Cut federal health spending by \$11.2 billion over five years by reducing Medicare pay for multiple imaging procedures and home health services and cutting Medicaid drug reimbursements to pharmacies, among other changes. Increased citizenship documentation rules for Medicaid enrollees and gave states more ability to restrict Medicaid benefits.

Senate vote: Adopted 52-47 on Nov. 3, 2005.

McCain: Yea.

Obama: Nay.

SOURCE: THOMAS, THE FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE INFORMATION SERVICE, AUGUST; CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE COST REPORTS

THE CANDIDATES' PLANS



HEALTH INSURANCE REFORM

Obama: Create a national insurance exchange to cover individuals through participating private plans. Set rules and standards for insurers, inform consumers about the plans' differences and offer subsidies for low-income people who enroll. Require insurers to justify above-average premium increases.

McCain: End the tax exclusion for employer-sponsored health insurance spending. Offer refundable tax credits of \$2,500 for individuals and \$5,000 for families to buy health insurance. Allow unspent tax credits to be deposited in health savings accounts.

COVERING THE UNINSURED

Obama: Offer a national plan with subsidies for lower-income people. Allow private insurers to offer the plan but bar denying applicants based on preexisting conditions.

McCain: Work with governors to create a private guaranteed access plan to those without prior group health coverage and those with preexisting conditions. Offer subsidies to lower-income people and put a "reasonable" limit on the cost of the plans' premiums.

HEALTH CARE COSTS

Obama: Require plans participating in a new national health plan, Medicare or federal employee plans to use disease-management programs. Support care coordination and medical homes. Reimburse employer plans for part of catastrophic costs if employers use the savings to reduce premiums. Offer a small business tax credit of up to 50% of premiums paid for employees.

McCain: Change Medicaid and Medicare reimbursement to pay for diagnosis, prevention and care coordination, but not for errors deemed preventable. Allow Medicaid to pay physicians and hospitals per episode of care instead of per treatment. Support access to retail clinics. Eliminate lawsuits against physicians who follow clinical guidelines and safety protocols.

HEALTH CARE QUALITY

Obama: Require doctors and hospitals to report measures of health costs and quality, including errors deemed preventable, hospital-acquired infections and disparities in care. Create an institute to guide reviews and research on comparative effectiveness.

McCain: Increase federal research on chronic disease treatments. Facilitate develop-

ment of national standards for measuring and recording diseases and outcomes.

HEALTH IT

Obama: Spend \$50 billion over the next five years to foster widespread adoption of standards-based health IT.

McCain: Support the implementation of health information systems to allow physicians to practice electronically across state lines and deliver care less expensively.

HEALTH COVERAGE MANDATES

Obama: Require all children to have health insurance and require employers who don't make a "meaningful" contribution to workers' coverage to pay into a national health plan. Exempt small businesses and provide a tax credit.

McCain: Not addressed.

PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

Obama: Allow imported medicines if the drugs are deemed safe and are less expensive than in the U.S. Allow the federal government to negotiate prices directly with drug firms for Medicare Part D. Encourage more use of generic drugs in federal health programs.

McCain: Consider allowing drug importation and faster introduction of generic drugs.