

Potential Healthcare Policies under the Biden Administration

December 1, 2020



LOMA LINDA UNIVERSITY
HEALTH

Institute for Health Policy and Leadership

President-Elect Joe Biden's Healthcare Plan

Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic

- Empower scientists at the CDC to help set national, evidence-based guidance on when/how to open schools, businesses, etc.
→ create a national “pandemic dashboard” shared publicly
- Ramp up testing and “ensure that all Americans have access to regular, reliable and free testing” → double the # of drive-through testing sites and invest in home tests & instant tests
- Mobilize 100k Americans to work with state and local health departments to do contact tracing and other public health work for at-risk populations
- Boost vaccine distribution & PPE production
- Have the federal government cover 100% of the cost for COBRA coverage during the pandemic



President-Elect Joe Biden's Healthcare Plan

Insurance Coverage: General

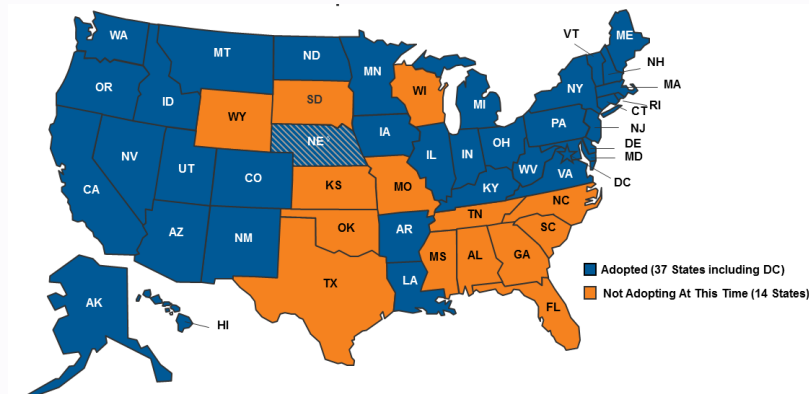
- Create a public health insurance option like Medicare within the Health Insurance Exchanges that is administered by CMS
 - Include a zero-deductible choice
 - Tax credit tied to a Gold level value
 - Automatic enrollment with opt-out available for people eligible for zero premiums
- Eliminate the 400% FPL cap on subsidies and limit premium to 8.5% of income
- Allow enrollment in the Health Insurance Exchange plans outside of the normal open enrollment period during special times such as a pandemic
- Empower states to use ACA innovation waivers to explore approaches such as universal health care



President-Elect Joe Biden's Healthcare Plan

Insurance Coverage: Medicaid

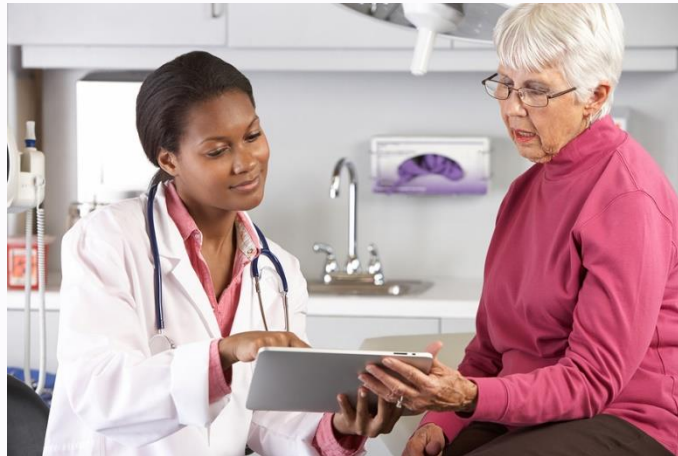
- Undo some of the waivers that are barriers to coverage
- Cover the 4.9 million individuals who would have been Medicaid eligible if their state expanded Medicaid by offering them premium-free access to the public option in the Health Insurance Exchanges
- Give expansion states the choice of moving their expansion population to the public health insurance option with no premium as long as the states continue to pay their current share of the cost of covering those individuals.



President-Elect Joe Biden's Healthcare Plan

Insurance Coverage: Medicare

- Allow Americans to enroll in Medicare at age 60
- Explore financially sustainable ways to add vision, hearing, and dental to Medicare benefits
- Reduce OOP drug spending cap in Medicare and provide drugs with proven benefit for chronic illnesses for free or low cost



President-Elect Joe Biden's Healthcare Plan

Rx Drug Pricing

- Repeal the existing law barring Medicare from negotiating lower prices with drug companies
- Apply negotiated prices to all purchasers
- Establish an independent review board to assess the value of excessively priced Rx drugs with little or no competition
- Limit cost inflation for all brand name and abusively priced generic drugs to CPI inflation rate
- Challenge mergers that decrease generic competition
- Allow individuals to import safe, high-quality Rx drugs



President-Elect Joe Biden's Healthcare Plan

Healthcare Workforce

- Increase wages for low-wage healthcare workers such as home care workers
- Implement a high-quality paid family leave system, ensuring that all employers provide at least 12 weeks of paid family and medical leave for all workers and family units
- Require all health care employers “funded by taxpayer dollars” to pay at least a \$15/hour wage
- Invest in community health workers
- Invest in recruitment, training, and support for providers of color



President-Elect Joe Biden's Healthcare Plan

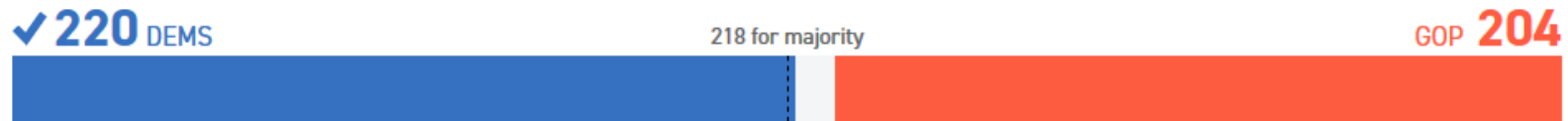
Additional Health-Related Policy Proposals

- Double the investments in community health centers
- Ban surprise billing (ongoing topic in the Congress)
- Adopt a nationwide strategy to tackle the US's high maternal mortality rates
- Require all Federally Qualified Health Clinics (FQHCs) to offer medication-assisted treatment for opioid addiction
- Require all federal health plans to provide coverage for HIV/AIDS treatment, HIV prevention medications like PrEP and PEP, etc.
- Address social determinants of health
- Focus on equity and health disparities

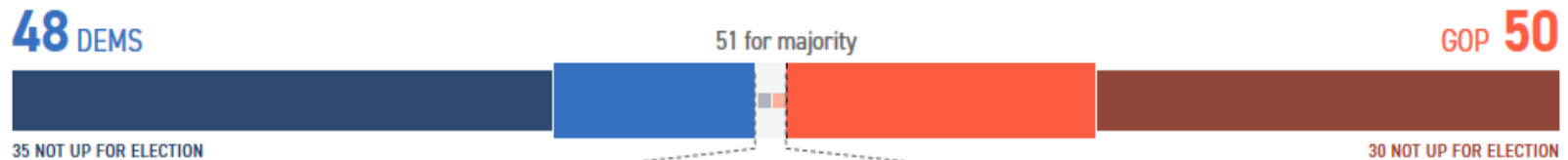


Reality: Challenges of a Split Congress

The House of Representatives



The Senate



- Two Senate seats (both from GA) are still undetermined because neither candidate won majority → special run-off election
 - Jan 5, 2021 = fateful date
 - David Perdue (R) vs. Jon Ossoff (D)
 - Kelly Loeffler (R) vs Raphael Warnock (D)

Another Reality: The Supreme Court

- Justices are 6-to-3 conservative majority
- *California v. Texas* (previously known as *Texas v. U.S.* in the lower courts) brought to the Supreme Court will decide the fate of the ACA
 - At the core of the issue: Individual Mandate & the 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act that reduced the penalty to zero, effectively eliminating the Individual Mandate part of the ACA
 - Because the federal government (the “defendant” in the first lawsuit) didn’t care to defend the ACA, 21 states led by CA are acting as “intervener defendants”
 - First oral arguments heard on Nov 10
 - Some signals from the Justices that they won’t strike down the entire ACA



The Future

- President-elect Biden faces a lot of challenges to making his policy agenda become a reality
- There will need to be lots of negotiations with the opposing party
- There will likely be many deadlocks on partisan issues since neither party has a clear dominance
- President-elect Biden may use Executive Orders to overcome partisan barriers for certain matters
- Stay tuned...!



Thank You!



Please email us at ihpl@llu.edu or visit us at ihpl.llu.edu