



Advocating for  
disability civil rights  
since 1979

## DISABILITY RIGHTS EDUCATION & DEFENSE FUND

August 2009

Dear Friends,

**People with disabilities need health care reform.** Here are some of the reasons why:

- Between 17 and 28 percent of people with disabilities are estimated to be uninsured, depending upon impairment or health condition.
- People with disabilities experience significant health and health care disparities compared with the general population.
- Research reveals that cost is the primary factor that explains why more than one in three people with disabilities put off seeking care, skip medications, or go without necessary equipment.
- Inadequate coverage means limited access to specialists, assistive devices and equipment, prescription drugs, mental health care, and care coordination.
- Health care facilities and services are still not fully accessible, 19 years after enactment of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
- The institutional bias in the Medicaid program means that many people with disabilities must live in nursing homes or other restrictive institutions rather than in homes of their own.

**Do the current health care bills respond to these issues?** Yes and no. The following summaries and analyses help clarify the answers:

- [A brief news summary that compares proposed key reforms](#)
- [The Kaiser Family Foundation side-by-side comparison of major health care reform proposals](#)
- [A summary of the Senate's Community Living Assistance Services and Supports \(CLASS\) provision](#)
- [The Bazelon Center's analysis of how the health bills affect people with mental health disabilities](#)
- The L.A. Times on the role of insurers — "[Health Care Insurers Get Upper Hand](#)"

### In This Issue

Health Care Reform  
Be Informed and  
Take Action

### Resources

Read the health care reform bills:

- [House Energy and Commerce Committee](#)
- [House Ways and Means Committee](#)
- [House Education and Labor Committee](#)
- [Senate HELP Committee](#)

[CCD Principles for Health Care Reform from a Disability Perspective](#)

[NCIL Position Paper on Universal Health Coverage](#)

[The Barrier Free Healthcare Initiative](#)

In California - [Disability Health Coalition](#)

### Research

[Understanding the Health Care Needs and Experiences of People with Disabilities: Findings from a 2003 Survey.](#)  
Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation

[B. Altman and A. Bernstein. Disability and Health in the United States, 2001–2005](#)  
(Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics, 2008)

## What can you do?

- [See Health Care for America Now for news, updates, and calls to action](#)
- [See the White House Health Insurance Reform Action Guide - Summer 2009](#)
- See The Arc's action alert: "[Health Care Reform: Now It's Personal!](#)"

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And as a tribute to Senator Ted Kennedy, write to your Senators and Congresspeople to tell them (and please personalize):

In honor of Senator Kennedy, stand firm on health care for all, including:

- A public option
- Coverage for pre-existing conditions
- Affordability
- Long term care
- Full coverage - durable medical equipment

"...the work goes on, the cause endures, the hope still lives, and the dream shall never die."

Senator Edward M. Kennedy, 1980

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