

A Quick Summary of the Affordable Health Choices Act

Senator Edward M. Kennedy, Chairman of the Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee (HELP), today released ***The Affordable Health Choices Act***, legislation that aims to reduce health care costs, protect individuals' choices of doctors, hospitals and insurance plans and guarantee, quality and affordable health care for all Americans.

The Affordable Health Choices Act includes the following five major elements:

CHOICE: An important foundation of ***The Affordable Health Choices Act*** is the following principle: If you like the coverage you have now, you keep it. But if you don't have health insurance or don't like the insurance you have, our bill will give you new, more affordable options.

COST REDUCTION: ***The Affordable Health Choices Act*** will reduce health care costs through stronger prevention, better quality of care and use of information technology. It will also root out fraud and abuse and reduce unnecessary procedures.

PREVENTION: The best way to treat a disease is to prevent it from ever striking, which is exactly why ***The Affordable Health Choices Act*** will give citizens the information they need to take charge of their own health. The bill will make information widely available in medical settings, schools and communities. It will also promote early screening for heart disease, cancer and depression and give citizens more information on healthy nutrition and the dangers of smoking.

HEALTH SYSTEM MODERNIZATION: ***The Affordable Health Choices Act*** will take strong steps to see that America has a 21st-century workforce for a modern and responsive healthcare system. America must make sound investments in training the doctors, nurses, and other health professionals who will serve the needs of patients in the years to come. It will make sure that patients' care is better coordinated so they see the right doctors, nurses and other health practitioners to address their individual health needs.

LONG TERM CARE AND SERVICES: ***The Affordable Health Choices Act*** will also make it possible for the elderly and disabled to live at home and function independently. It will help them afford to put ramps in their homes, pay someone to check in on them regularly, or any of an array of supports that will enable them to stay in their communities instead of in nursing homes.