

HEALTH CARE REFORM
TALKING POINTS FOR MEETINGS WITH LEGISLATORS
(Do Not Distribute to the Member of Congress or His/Her Staff)

- We support legislative and regulatory reforms that build on the current successful employer-based health insurance system (more than 60% of all Americans are covered through employer plans, and most like their current insurance).
- We support access to affordable health insurance for all Americans.
- We are willing, expert participants in the process of crafting meaningful, effective reform proposals.

The Advice of Health Insurance Agents Is Critical for Consumers--Including Small Businesses

- Health insurance advisors provide valuable services that the present and future health systems cannot do without. Professional agents:
 - Find coverage for individuals and employers at the best price for the benefit packages that work best for them.
 - Explain how benefits package choices affect price—including different kinds of basic coverages as well as alternative or supplemental plans like FSAs, HSAs, long-term care, disability, etc.
 - Explain how deductibles and copayment requirements affect price.
 - Explain coordination of coverage and compliance issues including COBRA, HIPAA, GINA, etc.
 - Help employers explain their insurance benefits to employees.
 - Act as consumer advocates when disputes or questions arise over paying benefits.
 - Help design and implement health promotion and wellness programs for employers—a key to combating increasing health care costs.
- The cost of this important advisory role represents a very small percentage of overall health care spending. According to a February 2009 Milliman Research Report, **the cost of the broker-based distribution system equals only 0.2% of total health care spending.**

We ask that Members of Congress only support health reform legislation that preserves the valued role agents play in the system.

Public Plan Option (Government-Run Health Insurance Plan)

- Creation of a new government plan would cause employer-provided health insurance to unravel. A recent analysis by the Lewin Group estimates over two-thirds of those with private coverage – over 118 million Americans – would be shifted into the government plan.
- Expanding government coverage would exacerbate cost shifting from government programs to private plans and threaten the ability of employers to continue to pay for coverage.
- The government plan would likely continue the current Medicare and Medicaid practice of underpaying providers, resulting in longer waits and reduced access to care for those who cannot afford to maintain private insurance.
- This new entitlement program can't be sustained without enormous *new* federal spending.

We ask that Members of Congress oppose creation of a new government-run insurance plan.

Health Insurance Exchange/Connector

- Depending upon how a health exchange/connector is established, the valuable role of agents in the sale and delivery of health insurance could be eliminated or significantly hindered.
- The service of licensed professionals cannot be duplicated by a federal government call center or a website.
- Excluding the role of the agent will cause great harm to consumers who depend on agents to be their advocate in the marketplace.

We ask that Members of Congress ensure that consumers have access to the guidance and expertise of a licensed professional health insurance agent.

Financing

- Lawmakers must come up with \$1 trillion or more to pay for health care reform.
- It would be wrong, and harmful to society and the economy, if Congress approved proposals that directly or indirectly imposed new taxes on life insurance or annuities.
- It would be counter productive to tax employer-provided health insurance in a way that would cause many—perhaps most—employers to stop offering health insurance to their workforce.