

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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'Health law upheld, but health needs still unmet': national doctors group

Although the Supreme Court has upheld the Affordable Care Act, the law will not remedy the U.S. health crisis, physicians group says

The following statement was released today by leaders of Physicians for a National Health Program (www.pnhp.org). Their signatures appear below.

Although the Supreme Court has upheld the Affordable Care Act (ACA), the unfortunate reality is that the law, despite its modest benefits, is not a remedy to our health care crisis: (1) it will not achieve universal coverage, as it leaves [at least 26 million uninsured](#), (2) it will not make health care affordable to Americans **with** insurance, because of high co-pays and gaps in coverage that leave patients vulnerable to financial ruin in the event of serious illness, and (3) it will not control costs.

Why is this so? Because the ACA perpetuates a dominant role for the private insurance industry. Each year, that industry siphons off hundreds of billions of health care dollars for overhead, profit and the paperwork it demands from doctors and hospitals; it denies care in order to increase insurers' bottom line; and it obstructs any serious effort to control costs.

In contrast, a single-payer, improved-Medicare-for-all system would provide truly universal, comprehensive coverage; health security for our patients and their families; and cost control. It would do so by replacing private insurers with a single, nonprofit agency like Medicare that pays all medical bills, streamlines administration, and reins in costs for medications and other supplies through its bargaining clout.

[Research](#) shows the savings in administrative costs alone under a single-payer plan would amount to \$400 billion annually, enough to provide quality coverage to everyone with no overall increase in U.S. health spending.

The major provisions of the ACA do not go into effect until 2014. Although we will be counseled to "wait and see" how this reform plays out, we've seen how comparable plans have worked in Massachusetts and other states. Those "reforms" have invariably failed our patients, foundering on the shoals of skyrocketing costs, even as the private insurers have continued to amass vast fortunes.

Our patients, our people and our national economy cannot wait any longer for an effective remedy to our health care woes. The stakes are too high.

Contrary to the claims of those who say we are “unrealistic,” a single-payer system is within practical reach. The most rapid way to achieve universal coverage would be to improve upon the existing Medicare program and expand it to cover people of all ages. There is legislation before Congress, notably [H.R. 676](#), the “Expanded and Improved Medicare for All Act,” which would do precisely that.

What is truly unrealistic is believing that we can provide universal and affordable health care in a system dominated by private insurers and Big Pharma.

The American people desperately need a universal health system that delivers comprehensive, equitable, compassionate and high-quality care, with free choice of provider and no financial barriers to access. Polls have repeatedly shown an improved Medicare for all, which meets these criteria, is the remedy preferred by [two-thirds](#) of the population. A solid majority of the medical profession [now favors](#) such an approach, as well.

We pledge to step up our work for the only equitable, financially responsible and humane cure for our health care ills: single-payer national health insurance, an expanded and improved Medicare for all.

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Physicians for a National Health Program (www.pnhp.org) is an organization of more than 18,000 doctors who advocate for single-payer national health insurance. To speak with a physician/spokesperson in your area, visit www.pnhp.org/stateactions or call (312) 782-6006.