

Incremental Reform

Medicare coverage expansion to selected deserving groups

There are both policy and strategy reasons for our push for Universal Single Payer health care coverage (everybody in nobody out), instead of incremental Medicare expansion for "selected deserving groups". UHCAN and Families USA support one incremental reform or another in the interests of "a step towards single payer". Healthcare Now supports Universal single-payer coverage, period.

Incremental reform is a step away, not towards, Universal single payer health care. There is Universal single payer, and there is incremental reform. There is a public health insurance system for all, or a private health insurance industry for the healthy and wealthy and deteriorating public and private coverage for the poor, sick, unprofitable, etc.

Attempting to pick and choose groups and adding them to Medicare is quite frankly, not single payer, and it could undermine the Medicare program in a way that could destroy the most successful public insurance program we have. It also does not reduce administrative costs or control health care costs, as of course single payer does.

Although Medicare expansions, like Medicaid expansions and S-CHIP expansions are better forms of incremental reform than, say, tax credits, it is still far short of Healthcare Now's goal.

PNHP does not endorse reforms other than single payer. Our main health policy principle is "tell the truth". It has served us well for 20 years, and advanced the movement.

(Paraphrased explanation given to us by Ida Hellander, MD, Executive Director, Physicians for a National Health Program, www.pnhp.org)