Status of U.S. Health Insurance and the Continuum of Proposals to Expand Coverage

Alliance for Health Policy Briefing: Examining the Continuum of Coverage Proposals

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Uninsured rates have fallen in response to coverage expansions, but gains stalled after 2015

Percent of individuals without health insurance*, 1997-2018

EXHIBIT 1

* At the time of interview.
EXHIBIT 3

The uninsured rate exceeded the national average in 14 of the 19 states that did not expand Medicaid by Jan. 2018

2017

2018

Notes: Medicaid expansion status as of January 1, 2018. Of the 19 states that had not expanded eligibility for Medicaid under the ACA as of January 2018, uninsured rates exceeded the national average in 15 of them.


EXHIBIT 4

More adults are underinsured, with the greatest growth occurring among those with employer coverage

Percent of adults ages 19-64 insured all year who were underinsured

Notes: "Underinsured" refers to adults who were insured all year but experienced one of the following: out-of-pocket costs, excluding premiums, equaled 10% or more of income; out-of-pocket costs, excluding premiums, equaled 5% or more of income if low-income (<200% of poverty); or deductibles equaled 5% or more of income. Total includes adults with coverage through Medicaid and Medicare. Respondents may have had another type of coverage at some point during the year, but had coverage for the entire previous 12 months. ^For 2014 and 2016, includes those who get their individual coverage through the marketplace and outside of the marketplace.


Notes: Estimates of median household income used in the denominator for this ratio come from the Current Population Survey (CPS), which revised its income questions in 2013. The denominator in our ratio estimates prior to 2014 is derived from the traditional CPS income questions, while ratio estimates from 2017 are estimated from the revised income questions. Household incomes have been adjusted for the likelihood that people in the same residence purchase health insurance together.


### EXHIBIT 5
**Premium and deductible costs in employer plans were nearly 12 percent of median income in 2017**

*Combined employee premium contribution and deductible as share of median income*

![Map showing percentage of median income for premium and deductible costs in employer plans in 2008, 2011, and 2017]

- 7.8% (11 states + D.C.)
- 9.8%–9.9% (11 states)
- 10.0%–11.9% (21 states)
- 12.0%–15.5% (18 states)

**Average employee premium contribution plus average deductible as percent of median state income in 2017**

![Map showing average employee premium contribution plus average deductible as percent of median state income in 2017]

- 7.8%
- 9.8%
- 11.7%

2008 2011 2017

### EXHIBIT 6
**Even bronze plan premiums can exceed 10% of income in many states for people earning just over the subsidy threshold**

*2019 HealthCare.gov premiums as a percentage of income for 40-year-olds earning $49,000*

![Map showing 2019 HealthCare.gov premiums as a percentage of income for 40-year-olds earning $49,000 between 2019 and 2017]

- Bronze plan
  - 8%-9%
  - 10%-12%
  - 13% or above
- Gold plan
  - 8%-9%
  - 10%-12%
  - 13% or above

Continuum of coverage proposals

**Adding public plan features to private insurance**

- HR 1884, Protecting Pre-Existing Conditions & Making Health Care More Affordable Act of 2019 (Rep. Pallone)
- S 2582, Consumer Health Insurance Protection Act of 2018 (Sen. Warren)

**A choice of public plan alongside private plans**

- S 2708, Choose Medicare Act (Sen. Merkley); HR 6117 (Rep. Richmond)
- HR 1346, Medicare Buy-In and Health Care Stabilization Act of 2019 (Rep. Higgins)
- S 470, Medicare at 50 Act (Sen. Stabenow)
- S 489 State Public Option Act (Sen. Schatz); HR 1277 (Rep. Lujan)

**Making public plans the primary source of coverage in the U.S.**

- HR 7339, Medicare for America Act of 2018 (Rep. DeLauro)
- S 1129, Medicare for All Act of 2019 (Sen. Sanders)
- HR 1384, Medicare for All Act of 2019 (Rep. Jayapal)
- HR 676, Expanded and Improved Medicare for All Act (Rep. Ellison)


2020 Democratic candidates currently have nuanced positions across the continuum

Favor adding more public plan features to private insurance and/or adding a choice of public plans alongside private

- Bennet
- Biden
- Bullock
- Buttigieg
- Castro
- Delaney
- Klobuchar
- O’Rourke
- Williamson

Favor making a public plan the primary source of coverage

- Booker
- Gabbard
- Harris
- Ryan
- Sanders
- Warren
- Yang

Replacing private insurance with public insurance like Medicare does not have strong support, but many need more information


Looking forward

- Polls indicate that health care is top of mind among voters.
- Several Democratic presidential candidates and members of Congress have proposed ways to expand coverage and improve affordability.
- Our survey suggests that people are confused about what a Medicare for all approach might mean for them and the health system and what the trade-offs are.
- Given the complexity of our health system, this may also be true for other approaches to improve coverage, including those advanced by Republicans.
- It is important that voters and policy makers understand the facts about what the range of current health reform proposals might mean for Americans and the health system, and what financing trade-offs might be required to implement them.