



Massachusetts Health Reform

An Alliance for Health Reform Toolkit
July 6, 2007

“Massachusetts Begins Universal Health Care”

The Washington Post
July 1, 2007

www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/06/30/AR2007063000248.html

This article, by Post health policy reporter Christopher Lee, describes the key points of the Massachusetts universal coverage plan and discusses how it could possibly be used as a national model. July 1, the day this story appeared, was the first day all adults in Massachusetts must have health coverage (except for the 60,000 exempted by the state).

“How 10 People Reshaped Massachusetts Health Care”

The Wall Street Journal
May 30, 2007

www.allhealth.org/publications/Uninsured/How_10_People_Reshaped_Massachusetts_Health_Care_58.pdf

This article describes the dynamics of the Commonwealth Health Insurance Connector board, 10 people from very disparate perspectives who were charged with working out the details of the universal coverage plan approved by the Massachusetts legislature. Health policy reporter Laura Meckler shows how the members of the board were able to find compromises on a variety of issues, driven by a desire to make the Massachusetts plan work.

“Health Care Reform: An Overview”

Massachusetts Commonwealth Connector

www.mahealthconnector.org/portal/site/connector/menuitem.d7b34e88a23468a2dbef6f47d7468a0c?fiShown=default

This is the web portal to information about the Massachusetts health reform plan offered by the Massachusetts Commonwealth Connector, referred to in the Wall Street Journal article above. You will find links to the text of the reform law, regulations concerning the law’s implementation and bulletins about the law.

“Massachusetts Health Care Reform Plan: An Update”

Kaiser Commission on Medicaid and the Uninsured

June 2007

www.kff.org/uninsured/upload/7494-02.pdf

This fact sheet, put together by the Kaiser Commission, outlines the components of the Massachusetts plan. Sections include the individual and employer mandates, the Connector, the Commonwealth Care Health Insurance Program, Medicaid expansions, insurance market reforms and preserving the safety net. The publication also poses and answers key questions about the affordability and employer responsibilities under the plan. Implications for other reform efforts are described.

“Massachusetts Health Reform Tracking Survey”

The Kaiser Family Foundation/Harvard School of Public Health/Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts Foundation

June 2007

www.kff.org/kaiserpolls/pomr062707pkg.cfm

This poll is the first in a series that will track the responses of Massachusetts residents to the new state health reforms. The poll finds that support for the new health insurance law has increased since September 2006. Two-thirds (67 percent) of state residents who have heard of the new health insurance law support it, compared with 16 percent who oppose it. In addition, more than half (57 percent, up from 52 percent in September) say they support the law’s individual mandate requirements, compared with 36 percent who oppose it.

“Despite Broad Goals, Questions Remain for Massachusetts Health Care Initiative”

The Online NewsHour

April 6, 2007

www.pbs.org/newshour/indepth_coverage/health/uninsured/massachusetts.html

This article notes that the Massachusetts plan has been “hailed as a legislative milestone,” but has some potential pitfalls – primarily related to the state’s Uncompensated Care Pool. State money to subsidize the new plan comes largely by diverting money from the pool. But the pool will still be needed until all residents are uninsured, a possible Catch-22, the article states.

“No Miracle in Massachusetts: Why Governor Romney’s Health Care Reform Won’t Work”

CATO Institute

June 6, 2006

www.cato.org/pub_display.php?pub_id=6407

This critique of the Massachusetts plan by Cato's Michael Tanner argues that the reform takes Massachusetts in the wrong direction because of greater governmental regulation of the health care industry and political interference in personal health care decisions. The report points to the new burdens placed on businesses, inefficient subsidies, and limitations on consumer choice required by the Health Care Connector as further detriments of the program.

“Insuring the Uninsured: Five Steps to Improve the Massachusetts Plan”

National Center for Policy Analysis

April 19, 2007

www.ncpa.org/pub/ba/ba585/index.html

This analysis by NCPA's Devon Herrick suggests that the Massachusetts plan could be improved by subsidizing it through a federal Medicaid block grant, allowing more consumer choice in plans, removing the plan's employer mandate, allowing insurers to charge premiums based on the insured's risk, and ending mandated benefits.

“Hiding in Plain View: ERISA Preempts Provisions of Massachusetts ‘Play or Pay’ Health Care Reform Law”

Health Care Policy Report

September 18, 2006

www.allhealth.org/publications/Private_health_insurance/ERISA_Preempts_Provisions_of_Massachusetts_Health_Care_Reform_Law_62.pdf

This article by health care attorney William G. Schiffbauer reviews the Massachusetts law within the context of ERISA and highlights key provisions that are, or are not, in conflict with the federal benefits law. Mr. Schiffbauer concludes that three provisions of the health reform law “contravene ERISA's purpose and would be preempted.”

“Issue Brief: Japan and Massachusetts—A Comparison of Universal Health Care Systems”

Missouri Foundation for Health

Spring 2006

www.mffh.org/JapanMassachusetts.pdf

This study by policy analyst M. Ryan Barker compares the general structure of both the Massachusetts and Japanese health care systems, specifically focusing on how each achieves universal access for its residents. It addresses the demographic and cultural factors that could affect the implementation of these programs, and concludes by examining how universal coverage in Massachusetts could affect the health of its residents.

Broken links: Please let us know at info@allhealth.org if you find that any of the links mentioned above no longer work.

Some Selected Experts and Websites

Analysts/Advocates

Stuart Altman, <i>Brandeis University</i>	781/736-3883
Marcia Angell, <i>Harvard Medical School</i>	617/432-2570
Joe Antos, <i>American Enterprise Institute</i>	202/862-5938
Leonard Burman, <i>Urban Institute</i>	202/833-7200
Michael Cannon, <i>Cato Institute</i>	202/842-0200
Gary Claxton, <i>Kaiser Family Foundation</i>	202/347-5270
Richard Curtis, <i>Institute for Health Policy Solutions</i>	202/789-1491
Karen Davis, <i>The Commonwealth Fund</i>	212/606-3800
Liz Fowler, <i>Health Policy Alternatives</i>	202/737-3390
Paul Fronstin, <i>Employee Benefit Research Institute</i>	202/775-6352
Beth Fuchs, <i>Health Policy Alternatives</i>	202/737-3390
Paul Ginsburg, <i>Center for Studying Health System Change</i>	202/484-4699
John Goodman, <i>National Center for Policy Analysis</i>	972/386-6272
Robert Greenstein, <i>Center for Budget and Policy Priorities</i>	202/408-1080
Jonathan Gruber, <i>Massachusetts Institute of Technology</i>	617/253-8892
Edmund Haislmaier, <i>The Heritage Foundation</i>	202/546-4400
John Holahan, <i>The Urban Institute</i>	202/833-7200
David Kendall, <i>Progressive Policy Institute</i>	406/543-2265
Arnold Kling, <i>Cato Institute</i>	202/789-5200
Jeanne Lambrew, <i>George Washington University</i>	202/416-0479
Robert Laszewski, <i>Health Policy and Strategy Associates</i>	703/727-9517
Merrill Matthews, <i>Council for Affordable Health Insurance</i>	703/836-6200x383
John McDonough, <i>Health Care for All</i>	617/350-7279
James Mongan, <i>Partners HealthCare</i>	617/278-1004
Robert Moffit, <i>The Heritage Foundation</i>	202/546-4400
Rabbi Jonah Pesner, <i>Greater Boston Interfaith Organization</i>	617/825-5600
Ron Pollack, <i>Families USA</i>	202/628-3030
Karen Pollitz, <i>Georgetown Univ. Health Policy Institute</i>	202/687-0880
Diane Rowland, <i>Kaiser Family Foundation</i>	202/347-5270
Greg Scandlen, <i>Consumers for Health Choices</i>	301/606-7364
William Scanlon, <i>Health Policy R&D</i>	202/624-3975
Gail Shearer, <i>Consumers Union</i>	202/462-6262
Nancy Turnbull, <i>Blue Cross Blue Shield of Mass. Foundation</i>	617/246-3744
Grace-Marie Turner, <i>Galen Institute</i>	703/299-8900
Enrique Martinez-Vidal, <i>State Coverage Initiatives</i>	202/292-6729
Alan Weil, <i>National Academy of State Health Policy</i>	207/874-6524

Government Agencies and Related Organizations

Nancy Atkins, <i>National Assoc. of State Medicaid Directors</i>	304/558-1700
Salvatore DiMasi, <i>Speaker, Mass. House of Representatives</i>	617/722-2500
Joan Fallon, <i>Massachusetts Commonwealth Connector</i>	617/573-1728
Jennifer Kritz, <i>Massachusetts Exec. Office of Health & Human Services</i>	617/933-3053
Matt Salo, <i>National Governors Association</i>	202/624-5336
Dennis Smith, <i>Center for Medicaid and State Operations, CMS</i>	410/786-3870
Robert E. Travaglini, <i>President, Massachusetts Senate</i>	617/722-1500
Beth Waldman, <i>Mass. Dept. of Health and Human Services</i>	617/573-1770
Joy Johnson Wilson, <i>National Conference of State Legislatures</i>	202/624-8689

Stakeholders

Robert J. Haynes, <i>Mass. AFL-CIO</i>	781/324-8230
Karen Ignagni, <i>AHIP</i>	202/778-3203
Cleve Killingsworth, <i>Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts</i>	617/246-3310
Thomas H. Lee, <i>Partners HealthCare Systems</i>	617/278-1079
Robert Ruddock, <i>Associated Industries of Massachusetts</i>	617/262-1180
Gerry Shea, <i>AFL-CIO</i>	202/637-5000

Weblinks

Alliance for Health Reform.....	www.allhealth.org
America’s Health Insurance Plans.....	www.ahip.org
The CATO Institute.....	www.cato.org
Center on Budget and Policy Priorities.....	www.cbpp.org
The Commonwealth Fund.....	www.cmwf.org
FamiliesUSA.....	www.familiesusa.org
The Galen Institute.....	www.galen.org
Greater Boston Interfaith Organization.....	www.gbio.org
Health Care for All.....	www.hcfama.org
Health Research and Educational Trust.....	www.hret.org
The Heritage Foundation.....	www.heritage.org
Kaiser Family Foundation.....	www.kff.org
Massachusetts Commonwealth Connector.....	www.MAhealthconnector.org
Massachusetts Legislature.....	www.mass.gov/legis
Massachusetts Politics and Policy Online at IssueSource.org....	www.02133.org
National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL).....	www.ncsl.org
Progressive Policy Institute.....	www.ppionline.org
State Coverage Initiatives.....	www.statecoverage.net
The Urban Institute.....	www.urban.org