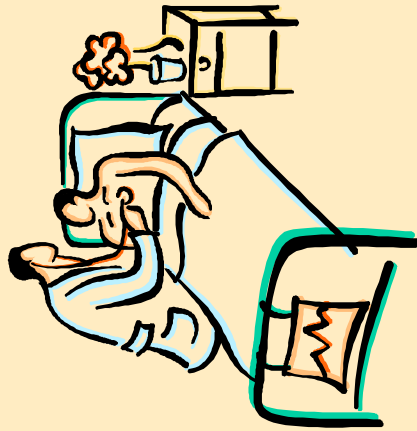


- **Our Health Depends on the Health of our Communities.** The health of human beings is interdependent - the untreated illness of some will eventually affect us all. The US must provide access to quality care for all living within its borders; including documented and undocumented immigrants and their families.

- **Health Care Workers are the Guardians of Patients and Need a Free Voice** Health care workers, like all workers, must be free to form unions. Health care unions must fight for health care justice and the highest quality of patient care at all levels of the health care system. All health care providers and workers have the right and responsibility to speak out on behalf of patients and consumers. They must thus be protected by law from retaliation by their employers.



**We in CCDS urge our members and friends to make the health care issue a central component of our effort to build a progressive majority during this election season.**

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**HEALTHCARE TALKING  
POINTS 2008**

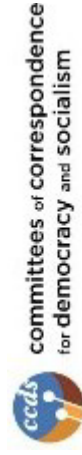
Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights says that everybody has the right to a standard of living adequate for health and well-being for themselves and their families, "including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control."



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## HEALTHCARE TALKING POINTS 2008

This year marks the 60th anniversary of the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights, which clearly links health care to other social conditions required for human well being. A transformed health care system must be based on single payer financing, a strong democratic community consisting of full worker participation, and economic well-being. To this end, we propose that the following essential elements be considered part of any program for quality, universal health care:

- **Twin Crises: The Economy and Health Care** The worsening health crisis for working people is inseparable from the current economic crisis. For every one percent increase in the national unemployment rate, over a million more people become uninsured. The next Administration must protect and strenuously expand the public financing of health care through Medicaid, Medicare, and the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP).
- **A Public Health System That is a Model for Care** The public health system which is being steadily undermined and underfunded must instead be rebuilt to assure the provision of preventive regulation, education, and services to the population as a whole and as a last resort for medical services. The public health system must become the model of a future system of equality, quality, and public accountability. This must start with the rebuilding of the health care infrastructure in communities impacted by Hurricane Katrina.

## The Only Way to Cut Costs Enough to Cover All is Through Single Payer

The prevailing rhetoric of "shared responsibility" for health care really means continuation of the status quo. We will never have enough money to provide care for everyone until the waste going to the private insurance industry is ended. While electronic medical records and wellness programs have been positive innovations in health care delivery, their use will not be a determining factor in driving health costs down, as some Democratic party candidates claim. Talk of such programs as alternatives to real reform is a gimmick to avoid the real causes of escalating costs, and promotion of non-solutions to the problem must be vigorously challenged. They must be rejected.

- **McCain's Health Care Medieval.** Presidential candidate John McCain's health "plan" places the entire burden of paying for health care on the individual and the family. This goes backwards in history. McCain's plan would also accelerate the destruction of employer-paid health insurance, which covers 60 percent of the non-elderly in the US. His proposed tax credit will do little to help people afford what is unaffordable. Healthcare premiums have increased by 91% since 2000, while wages have increased only by 24% in that period. McCain's plan is sponsored by the rapacious health insurance industry - one of the "special interests" to which he pretends to have no allegiance. Therefore the American people must reject the McCain plan.

- **Mandates Raise Costs without Improving the Quality of Care.** Mandates requiring individuals and families to buy private insurance have failed in states in which they have been tried. Costs rise inexorably in these programs. The real reasons for the excessive expense of US health care should be exposed by the Presidential candidates and they must propose a real solution to cutting the cost of health care in the U.S.

- **Private, for Profit Insurance Has No Place in Health Care.** The Democratic Party must not assume the role of the preserver of the private insurance industry. Only a single payer financing system such as that proposed by Congress persons John Conyers and Dennis Kucinich - HR 676 - can save the estimated \$350 billion a year which is presently wasted on private health insurance. The organized labor movement should be called upon by its members to take the leadership in securing this objective.

- **Health disparities are worsening** According to the Kaiser Family Foundation, 60 percent of existing racial and ethnic health disparities are not narrowing or are getting worse. For example, the gap in life expectancy between different population groups is actually widening. The eradication of these inequalities in health must be at the top of the healthcare agenda. A single payer financing system is necessary to bring these disparities to an end, but is insufficient to effectively eradicate disparities which are rooted in the complex history of racism and bigotry in our country. Health disparities for ethnic minorities are made worse by language barriers between health providers and patients. Therefore, all health facilities must provide full time language interpretation services in the prevailing languages of the communities they serve.

## HEALTHCARE TALKING POINTS 2008



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