

Healthcare Reform: Senate Update

The battle for healthcare reform is heating up now that the Senate Finance Committee, under the lead of Chairman Max Baucus, is poised to vote soon on a proposal. While healthcare reform remains a moving target, the Finance Committee proposal raises serious concerns for the debate, while falling far short of the legislation introduced in the House of Representatives.

Key problems with the Senate Finance proposal include:

- **It taxes healthcare benefits, potentially impacting thousands of USW members with higher-cost plans.** These plans could be expensive because they cover older workers, workers with worse than average health histories or even because of a geographic area. While the tax is levied on insurers, or self-insured employers, the cost will undoubtedly be passed on to workers in the form of higher premiums.
- **It doesn't include a public option.** A public option – like in the House bill – would provide real competition for private insurance companies.
- **Employers are not required to contribute in some way towards employees' healthcare,** allowing irresponsible employers to continue dumping their healthcare costs on others with no penalty.

Once the Senate Finance Committee votes as anticipated, it will be up to Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid to develop a final bill for the full Senate's consideration. This bill could incorporate aspects of a better version that was previously passed out of the Senate's health committee.

**Rapid Response will provide more information as it develops.
Be ready to take action again to help shape the debate!**