

The Positions of the Presidential Candidates on Addressing Disparities in Cancer Care

Issue	Hilary Clinton	Barack Obama	John McCain
<i>Universal Health Care Coverage</i>	<p>Senator Clinton's <i>American Health Choices Plan</i> is intended "to ensure quality and affordable health care for all Americans" by allowing individuals to keep their current health insurance plan or to have access the same menu of private insurance options available to Members of Congress and their staff. As such, Clinton's plan would: provide tax relief; limit premium payments to a percentage of income; create a new small business tax credit; strengthen Medicaid and SCHIP; and launch a retiree health legacy initiative.</p>	<p>Senator Obama has proposed a new national health plan, which will give individuals the choice to buy affordable health coverage that is similar to the plans available to federal employees. The new public plan will be open to individuals who do not have access to group coverage through their employer or to current public programs. The plan will also be available to people who are self-employed and for small businesses that want to offer insurance to their employees.</p>	<p>Senator McCain believes that families should be in charge of their health care dollars and have more control over their care. He would allow people to have portable insurance that could be purchased along state lines. Senator McCain also proposes \$2,500 in refundable tax credits for low-income individuals and \$5,000 to low-income families who obtain their own health insurance.</p>
<i>Access to care for cancer patients without insurance or Medicare coverage</i>	<p>Senator Clinton acknowledges the need for universal access to health insurance although her plan is not specific about how she will accomplish this. She has proposed strengthening Medicaid and SCHIP to address holes in the safety net so that vulnerable populations will have access to affordable, quality care.</p>	<p>Senator Obama states his intention to ensure all patients have access to the healthcare coverage they need. Within his universal coverage plan, he has proposed offering affordable premiums, co-pays and deductibles. Individuals that don't qualify for Medicare or SCHIP but still need financial assistance would receive an income-related federal subsidy to buy into the new public plan or purchase a private healthcare plan.</p>	<p>Senator McCain has no specific plans for providing access to care for uninsured Americans. He states that while he reforms the health care system, the quality of care will be maintained. He also states that we can and must provide access to health care for all of our citizens.</p>

<p><i>Addressing cancer health care disparities among minorities and the medically underserved</i></p>	<p>To address racial and ethnic health disparities that are pervasive throughout the healthcare system, Clinton’s plan includes the development and testing of quality measures for use by doctors, hospitals, nursing homes and other providers targeted at eliminating racial and ethnic disparities in healthcare. She will provide \$50 million in federal funding for the development of culturally and linguistically competent clinical care programs, to ensure that healthcare providers are better able to communicate with their patients. This funding would also cover professional training so health professionals will understand and respect cultural differences in the patients they treat.</p>	<p>Obama would tackle the root causes of health disparities by addressing differences in access to health coverage and by promoting prevention and public promotion. His plan would also challenge the medical system to eliminate inequities in healthcare by requiring hospitals and health plans to collect, analyze and report healthcare quality measures for underserved populations and by holding institutions to account for any differences found. Senator Obama’s plan also calls for diversifying the workforce to ensure culturally effective care and the implementation and funding of evidence-based interventions.</p>	<p>Senator McCain offers no specific plans for addressing disparities in care among minorities and the medically underserved.</p> <p>He is on record as stating the need to protect the healthcare consumer through the enforcement of federal laws against collusion and unfair and deceptive business practices.</p>
<p><i>Government’s role in addressing obesity prevention as a public health goal supported by federal government programs and dollars</i></p>	<p>In Clinton’s plan, she addresses the need for mandatory physical education programs in schools and new policies to improve the nutrition quality of the foods available in schools. Her plan would increase funding for the Carol White Physical Education program by 50% (\$36 million) and ensure this funding gets to underserved communities with the highest rates of childhood obesity. The Clinton plan also advocates implementing a healthy schools program that would provide funding for schools that commit to replacing all unhealthy food in schools with healthy food by the year 2012.</p>	<p>Obama has said that health coverage is critically important for a healthy start in life, and this is particularly true now that the rate of many childhood diseases such as obesity continue to rise. Obama’ plan supports fully funding SCHIP to ensure all children have access to the healthcare and preventive services they need. He also states that schools and families need to get involved so children will learn healthy habits.</p>	<p>McCain believes that parents are responsible for insuring their children are taught about health, nutrition and exercise. He also states that children should be provided with healthy dietary choices in schools and says public health leadership, including by the next President, must promote lower rates of obesity.</p>

<p><i>Budget allotment for behavior research and clinical trial participation among high cancer risk populations, including minorities and the medically underserved</i></p>	<p>Clinton’s plan consists of many different programs to increase federal funding for cancer. She proposes doubling the NIH and NCI budgets, expanding the NCI Cancer Centers program so every American lives within the service area of an NCI Cancer Center, and supporting federal policies that will increase by fivefold the number of patients participating in cancer clinical trials. Clinton’s plan would also preserve Medicare coverage of clinical trials and ensure that minorities have the opportunity to participate.</p>	<p>Obama would wage war on cancer by allotting more financial resources. He has pledged to make eliminating cancer one of his top priorities and plans to increase funding for the NIH, NCI and for other medical research programs.</p>	<p>McCain proposes that federally sponsored research should focus on the care and cure of chronic disease and facilitate the development of national standards for measuring and recording treatments and outcomes.</p>
<p><i>Access to screening programs for the medically underserved for other types of cancer</i></p>	<p>Clinton proposes requiring all insurers participating in federal programs to cover prevention services. Her plan proposes making it a priority to increase access to screening tools that have been shown to work. Her plan also identifies removing Medicare co-pays for colorectal and breast cancer screenings while fully funding the National Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program.</p>	<p>Obama is on record as stating that individuals and families must have access to essential clinical preventative services, such as cancer screenings and smoking cessation programs. Accordingly, the Obama health plan would require coverage for screening programs in all federally-supported health plans, including Medicare, Medicaid, SCHIP and his new public plan.</p>	<p>As a cancer survivor, McCain states the need for cancer screenings. He supports coverage of preventative services and would make patients the center of care and give them a larger role in both prevention and care.</p>
<p><i>Access to primary care services regardless of race or socioeconomic status</i></p>	<p>It is Clinton’s priority to make sure that all Americans have access to primary health care. She is on record as calling on the healthcare industry to end unfair insurance discrimination. She has also stated the need to create a level playing field of insurance rules across states and markets, so no American is denied coverage, refused renewal, unfairly priced out of the market or forced to pay excessive insurance company premiums.</p>	<p>Obama states that no American should be turned away from any insurance plan because of illness or a pre-existing condition. Under his health plan, everyone would have access to the primary care services they need.</p>	<p>McCain supports different methods of delivering care, including walk-in clinics and developing routes for cheaper generic drugs to enter the U.S. market. McCain calls for expanding medical savings accounts, offering flexible savings accounts, providing full tax deductibility for self-employed health insurance costs and allowing tax deductibility for long-term care expenses.</p>