



HOUSE CALL WITH DR. SANJAY GUPTA
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Could Healthcare Reform Boost the Economy?

Could healthcare reform boost the economy? The late-term abortion debate continues. Congress is working to give the FDA more power in the food industry. Sanjay Gupta takes you inside the operating room as he performs neurosurgery.

Good morning. Welcome to HOUSE CALL, the show that helps you live longer and stronger. I'm Dr. Sanjay Gupta. Thanks so much for watching. Like I told you, we're going to be your source for discussions about health care reform. There's another chapter. Could reform boost the economy?

You're watching HOUSE CALL.

GUPTA: Health care reform -- this time, the White House is making an economic case. An administration report released this week says by spending an estimated \$1 trillion, the government can actually help save money down the road.

That's important, because according to a CNN/Opinion Research Poll, 69 percent of Americans are in favor of the government stepping in if it lowers health care costs and increases coverage. That's a big "if," as you know.

Government says these reforms would be -- would lower the unemployment rate, increase the amount of people in the workforce by cutting absenteeism, disability. The group also says these reforms could also help slow the growth

in the U.S. deficit.

GUPTA: Lots to digest there. But, you know, one thing, it seems to be, at the heart of all this is the cost savings promised by the health care industry. And we didn't see that back in '94. How do they plan to cut these costs and how many are we potentially talking about here?

WILLIS: We're talking about \$2 trillion over 10 years. That's a lot of money. And to do this, the health care industry promised to do several things, including streamlining claims processing and bundling payments so that hospitals, doctors and insurers work together to build one fee for one treatment. There also the emphasis on prevention, like screening for diabetes, heart disease, cancer, depression -- Sanjay?

Some feel the health care system should be built on competition, and the government shouldn't take that away. Lots of questions, though, about whether this can really happen. I guess, Sanjay, we're just going to have to wait and see if it can get passed and become law, and if the expectations can become reality.

GUPTA: Well, Gerri, with your help, we're going continue to be the source on health care reform. A lot of people interested. Thanks so much for joining us.

WILLIS: My pleasure.

This is HOUSE CALL.

GUPTA: It is time for my favorite segment of the show: Ask the Doctor. Let's jump right in.

Here is a question from Lynn in Georgia. "Can an insurance company deny you coverage for a pre-existing condition? What are my options?"

We get this question all the time. Lynn, first of all, the short answer is yes. One in five Americans who apply for insurance on their own do have a hard time getting it because of pre-existing conditions.

Now, there are some options which we have researched in about a dozen states. You can actually become something known as a "group of one," in other words, one person becomes their own company, making it easier to get and negotiate with insurance companies. You can also join the state high risk pool -- and this can be expensive, but it might be worth checking out for you.

Finally, there are advocates that can help you. We looked into this. Two good Web sites: CoverageForAll.org and the CoverMeFoundation.org. Both have people to answer your questions 24/7. Lynn, good luck with that.