

# HEALTH CARE FOR MASSACHUSETTS CAMPAIGN

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649 Massachusetts Avenue, Suite 8 ♦ Cambridge, MA 02139 ♦ (617) 868-1280

## **FACT SHEET**

### **Health Care Insurance for Massachusetts Constitutional Initiative Petition**

#### **THE PROBLEM**

- Massachusetts has almost 600,000 residents-most of whom work or are members of working families-without insurance, who are often unable to get the care they need, and who suffer needlessly as a result.
- Skyrocketing health care costs threaten those with insurance as the state tries to balance the budget and employers, faced with higher premiums, are forced to raise employee contributions or cut health benefits.
- Providers, including doctors, home health care agencies, hospitals and nursing homes are feeling the funding crunch from reimbursement cuts and increased paperwork requirements. Some have closed; many more are running in the red.
- Many doctors, home health care agencies, hospitals and nursing homes are being forced to close due to significant reimbursement cuts.
- Despite decades of debate, there has been no meaningful action.

#### **BASIC PRINCIPLES**

- Every state resident should have affordable health insurance so they can get medically necessary care, medications and supplies in a timely manner.
- Every resident should have access to high quality care to guarantee the best possible health outcomes and the best use of our health care dollars.
- Health insurance should be affordable and equitably financed to ensure access and an end to wasteful and unfair cost shifting.
- Rising costs must be contained.
- Expanded coverage can be financed through administrative streamlining and access to high quality, cost-effective care for all Massachusetts residents.
- We don't need more money; we need to be smarter about how we spend our health care dollars.
- Medical research and innovation that ensures quality care, cost-effective care and which is a major driver of economic growth must be promoted.

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## **WHAT THE PROPOSED AMENDMENT WOULD DO**

- Ensure that every Massachusetts resident would have access to the health care they need when they need it.
- Require the Legislature and Governor to enact laws that made sure every Massachusetts resident has affordable, comprehensive and equitably financed health insurance.
- Cover medically necessary health and mental health services including prescription medications and supplies.

## **WHAT IT WOULD NOT DO**

- Require that the state become the insurer.
- Specify any particular mechanism, public or private, for financing expanded coverage.
- Involve the courts in micromanaging our health care system.

## **THE PROCESS**

- 65,825 signatures were certified by the Secretary of State and the proposed amendment was forwarded to the legislature on January 2, 2004.
- Get 50 legislators to vote for the proposal in joint session By May 12, 2004
- Get 50 legislators to vote for the proposal in joint session By May 2005 or 2006
- Get a majority of Massachusetts voters to vote "YES" November 7, 2006

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