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News Brief

America's Agenda: Health Care for All Statement on President Obama's State of the Union Message

Washington, D.C. (January 28, 2010) – Mark Blum, executive director of America's Agenda: Health Care for All, released the following statement regarding President Obama's State of the Union address:

"The fight for meaningful health-care reform is far from over. Regardless of political affiliation, millions currently go without sufficient care. Our health system is badly fragmented. Costs are skyrocketing out of control. As President Obama said in his speech, now is not the time to walk away from Americans faced with crisis. Quitting on them is not acceptable. "Last night, the President challenged Democrats and Republicans to offer their best ideas, in true bipartisan fashion, to complete legislation already advanced by the House and Senate. In doing so, Congress will help drive down costs, improve quality of care, prevent chronic disease and meet the expectations of the American people. The coming days and weeks are a time and a test for members on both sides of the aisle to accept the President's invitation and put the interests of hard-working Americans ahead of political partisanship.

"One idea worthy of implementation is expanding incentives for care providers to work in teams. Put simply, family doctor-directed personal medical teams hold enormous promise for increasing the productivity of primary care providers, controlling costs, and improving patient outcomes. They will help prevent and treat chronic diseases like cancer, diabetes, and heart disease that account for the vast majority of national health spending. "Some core ideas proposed by Republicans could also yet be integrated constructively into the framework for reform laid out in the Senate and House bills, assuming they are offered in an honest effort to reach final agreement on legislation.

"At the end of the day, there is broad agreement on the majority of reform policies currently on the table. Failure to resolve partisan differences is rooted less in legitimate policy disagreements than in political maneuvering that is breeding deepening voter distrust. The President has created an opportunity for members of both parties to earn back the trust of the American people by coming together in a good faith effort to deliver a final bill that will improve their lives.