

Passing the Torch: State Implementation of Federal Health Care Reform

Health care reform is now law.

Getting a meaningful reform package to the President's desk was a challenging endeavor, so, too, is effective implementation. State officials and health-care groups will play a major role. Consumers and others facing the challenges of today's broken system – players who are too often left out of these discussions – should also be involved.

After meeting with Washington's governor, Chris Gregoire, as well as key lawmakers and health care advocates, I have decided to convene a Health Care Reform Realization Committee. Its mission: to gather recommendations from opinion- and community leaders across the state on four critical pieces of health care reform:

- A health insurance exchange and reforms of the insurance market
- Expansion of public health programs
- Improvements in quality and efficiency
- And workforce development

The 30-person committee includes hospital administrators, family physicians, nurses, patients, tribal leaders, small- and large business owners, social service agencies, public health officers and local- and state government officials.

They'll be asked to come up with recommendations for the best ways to implement federal health reform, including proposed legislation or rules.

To ensure that all voices are heard, I have also created a way for you to [comment on the committee's work](#).

I am committed to effective implementation of our new health care reform law. I serve as chair of the committee, and my office will provide staff to ensure that the committee can meet its goals.

Our nation's health care system is unsustainable. The costs are rising far faster than inflation for a system that is failing an increasing number of people. We as states must be prepared to make it work.

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