

## Background on Health Care Reform

Our health care system is broken. Over 800,000 Tennesseans don't have health insurance and every day more are denied coverage because of pre-existing conditions or are priced out of the system by skyrocketing premiums. For too long we have recognized problems in our health care system - cost, access and quality - but have not taken responsibility for them.

We need meaningful healthcare reform that will lower costs, expand access and improve quality. As President Obama and his team work to enact comprehensive reform, they will adhere to the following principles:

- **Reduce rising healthcare costs for families, business, and government.**  
Tennessee's families and small businesses are being crushed by sky-rocketing health care costs and they are losing the choices they value most. Every day in Tennessee, families are forced to choose a different doctor because their employer can no longer afford the old plan. No longer should people have to decide to skip a doctor's visit or medication that they know they need because they can't afford the payment.
- **Allow all patients choice in their own coverage and their own doctor.**  
President Obama is committed to health care reform that guarantees Tennesseans their health care choice. He has consistently said that if a family likes what they have, they will be able to keep it under health care reform. The president will support health care reform that builds on the existing employer-based system but also supports providing Tennesseans with the option for public health insurance operating alongside private plans. This would provide a better range of choices, make the health care market more competitive, and keep insurance companies honest.
- **Ensure that quality, affordable healthcare is available to all Tennesseans.**  
Any successful reform will emphasize quality care over quantity. President Obama has called for reform that would; provide technology to doctors for medical research to boost prevention and wellness so that Tennesseans are healthier and everyone saves money; rapidly expand computerized medical records with strong privacy protection, that would reduce needless and costly paperwork, and provide doctors with the best, most up-to-date information to reduce medical errors, saving lives and money.

During the campaign the President talked about the fierce urgency of now in regards to voting. If health care reform is going to be passed it cannot wait another year. The Tennessee Democratic Party is working closely with President Obama to ensure that health care reform becomes a reality by the end of 2009. For Tennessee families, the status quo is unacceptable. Stand with President Obama on his principles for health care reform by going to <http://www.tndp.org> and ensuring your voice is heard.