



07-22-09

President Obama pitches healthcare, including rural healthcare

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In a prime-time White House press conference Wednesday, President Obama delivered an upbeat progress report on healthcare reform. He said that “even though we still have a few issues to work out, what’s remarkable at this point is not how far we have left to go – it’s how far we have already come.”

Listing achievements already agreed to in the plan Congress is working on, Obama said: “If you already have health insurance, the reform we’re proposing will provide you with more security and more stability. It will keep government out of health care decisions, giving you the option to keep your insurance if you’re happy with it. It will prevent insurance companies from dropping your coverage if you get too sick. It will give you the security of knowing that if you lose your job, move, or change your job, you will still be able to have coverage. It will limit the amount your insurance company can force you to pay for your medical costs out of your own pocket. And it will cover preventive care like check-ups and mammograms that save lives and money. If you don’t have health insurance, or are a small business looking to cover your employees, you’ll be able to choose a quality, affordable health plan through a health insurance exchange – a marketplace that promotes choice and competition. Finally, no insurance company will be allowed to deny you coverage because of a pre-existing medical condition.”

Obama promised that “We will pass reform that lowers cost, promotes choice, and provides coverage that every American can count on. And we will do it this year.” He also promised that “health insurance reform will not add to our deficit over the next decade.”

Questioned on why he’s in such a rush to get health reform legislation passed, the President who begins each day by reading letters written by people from all across the county said that “I’m rushed because I get letters every day from families that are being clobbered by health care costs and they ask me, can you help? . . . And in a country like ours, that’s not right.”

Questioned on why his plan doesn’t have complete support among Democrats, Obama answered with an example which showed his awareness of rural issues. “You’ve got some Democrats who are concerned that the Medicare reimbursement rates in their communities are too low and so they’d like to see the bill incorporate higher rates for

doctors and providers in rural communities to incentivize good care in those communities,” he explained. “That is a legitimate concern. But the minute you bring up that concern, then that adds money, which means that we then have to find additional dollars. So this is part of just the normal give and take of the legislative process. I am confident at the end that we are going to have a bill that Democrats and some Republicans support.”



President Obama at his July 22nd East Room news conference on health care

To watch a video of President Obama’s July 22nd news conference on health care, go to: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/The-Presidents-Press-Conference-Full-Video/>