

United States of Care (USofCare) is a non-partisan health care advocacy organization committed to transforming health care in this country to better meet the needs of people. Our research cuts across the challenges people face with the health care system and the solutions people want to prioritize to solve them. In collaboration with everyday people, business leaders, health care innovators, advocates, and policymakers, we drive durable, people-centered policy change at both the state and federal level.

Federal Health Policy Priorities That Put People At the Center of Health Care

From our [listening work](#), we know people want health care that is [affordable](#), [transparent](#), and prioritizes [quality of care over profits](#). People feel the burden of high health care costs, and demand action from lawmakers. Federal policymakers should advance policies that put people at the center of health and:

<p>Reduce the High Cost of Health Care Resulting from Unfair Hospital Billing</p>	<p>Improve Health Care Coverage, Access, and Affordability</p>
<p>Promote Patient-Centered Care through Innovative Payment and Delivery System Reform</p>	<p>Eliminate Health Inequities and Reduce Barriers to Care</p>

We recommend federal policymakers advance the following reforms through legislation or regulation.

★ **Reduce the High Cost of Health Care Resulting from Unfair Hospital Billing:** *Americans pay more per person for health care than any other wealthy country, with health care spending typically outpacing inflation. The hospital sector remains the primary driver in overall spending, saddling patients with unsustainable and often hidden costs.*

Legislative Reforms should:

- Require site-neutral payment within Medicare, passing reforms as recommended by MedPAC in June 2022, to reduce unexpected health care costs and address rampant hospital consolidation.
- Eliminate hospital facility fees for outpatient services, including telehealth visits.
- Eliminate out-of-pocket costs for basic health care services, including preventive services, mental health care, telehealth and primary care visits.

Regulatory Reforms should:

- Standardize and improve data collection and reporting procedures to make hospital prices more transparent and understandable to consumers.
- Increase hospital pricing transparency and affordability, including creating new reporting requirements for hospitals and establishing enforcement mechanisms.

★ **Promote Patient-Centered Care through Innovative Payment and Delivery System Reform:** *The current health care system's emphasis on fee-for-service payment does not serve people and their health needs. Instead, it incentivizes providers to prioritize the quantity of visits and billable treatments rendered over the quality of care for the whole patient.*

Legislative Reforms should:

- Protect the ability of the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Innovation (CMMI) to pilot and establish innovative payment models that lead to high-quality patient outcomes.
- Expand programs that increase the number of providers moving away from fee-for-service models to providing patient-first care, such as the AHEAD Model, and Advanced Alternative Payment Models (AAPMs).
- Address primary care workforce and access shortages in medically underserved communities.

Regulatory Reforms should:

- Accelerate the transition to APMs with an emphasis on arrangements that prioritize health equity within their design and improve access for underserved communities
- Incorporate health equity-based principles into value based care arrangements when piloting and structuring demonstration models to reduce historical health disparities and ensure patient care experiences are centered.
- Build meaningful engagement opportunities for beneficiaries and consumers to convey their perspectives and needs throughout policy and model development at CMMI, from inception through implementation, communication, and evaluation.
- Ensure that regulatory frameworks and guidelines for the use and application of emerging digital health and generative artificial intelligence technology centers patients and everyday peoples' experiences in the health care system.

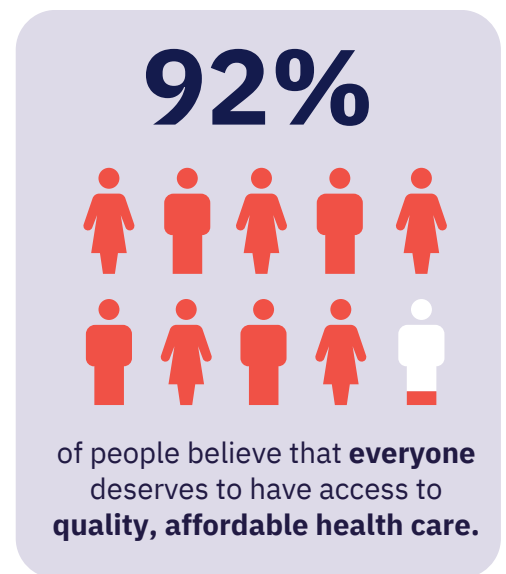
★ **Improve Health Care Coverage, Access, and Affordability:** *People's foremost concern about the health care system is the high cost of care and the fear that when they need health care, they will not be able to afford it. From our research, we know people want dependable, affordable, and personalized coverage that they can count on. Lawmakers have the opportunity to improve the quality of health care and must prioritize policy solutions that will provide people with the security and freedom of affordable coverage.*

Legislative Reforms should:

- Provide people with continued access to enhanced subsidies for people buying coverage through the ACA marketplace, which are set to expire at the end of 2025.
- Expand comprehensive, low-cost coverage options by allowing individuals and small businesses to access high-quality, dependable, affordable, and government-regulated options for health insurance.

Regulatory Reforms should:

- Prioritize approval of state proposals to improve access to affordable, dependable quality health care coverage, such as 1332 state innovation waivers, or Basic Health Programs.
- Limit access to "junk" insurance that doesn't protect people or comprehensively address people's health care needs, such as short-term limited duration plans.
- Encourage states to close the coverage gap for people living in the ten states that have yet to expand Medicaid and create policies that make it easier for people to maintain continuity of coverage, like extending 12-month continuous eligibility to more kids and adults, and extending postpartum Medicaid coverage to 12-months.



★ **Eliminate Health Inequities and Reduce Barriers to Care:** *Our research shows that people desire a system that provides quality health care to everyone and treats people with respect and dignity. Obstacles such as discrimination and bias but also other drivers of health such as poor education, low wages, poor air quality, housing, and low or no access to quality affordable health care prevent people from attaining and maintaining the resources needed for them to be as healthy as possible.*

Legislative Reforms should:

- Promote equitable access to telehealth and virtual care through permanent expansion of telehealth flexibilities and requiring insurance companies to cover all methods of appointments whether by video or audio-only.
- Establish progress toward culturally responsive care with a focus on: improving benefit design and provider networks with an emphasis on health equity, looking for ways to recruit and retain a diverse health care workforce, and examining provider training programs for their comprehensiveness in addressing culturally responsive care.
- Ensure that new digital health technology, including artificial intelligence, addresses the concerns of historically underserved communities and does not magnify existing health inequities.

Regulatory Reforms should:

- Expand access and coverage for qualifying preventive health services and products at no-cost to the consumer.
- Ensure patients are protected from discrimination on the basis of disability, race, ethnicity, gender identity, religion, socioeconomic status, and additional intersecting identities.

For more information about our federal priorities, please reach out to
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