

Benefits of new health care legislation to the East End

In a bulletin to constituents, Rep. Tim Bishop outlined some immediate advantages to the 1st Congressional district. He, among others, believes it will make health care affordable for the middle class, provide security for seniors, and guarantee access to health insurance for the uninsured. It is also expected to reduce the federal deficit by over \$100 billion over the next 10 years. Here are a few benefits of the legislation.

Security for seniors

- Medicare recipients' benefits will be improved by providing free preventive and wellness care, improving primary and coordinated care, and enhancing nursing home care. The bill also strengthens the Medicare Trust Fund, extending its solvency from 2017 to 2026.
- The legislation works toward closing the Part D donut hole within a decade. Each year, innumerable Medicare beneficiaries enter the Part D donut hole and must pay the full cost of their prescription drugs. Under the bill, these beneficiaries will receive a \$250 rebate in 2010, 50% discounts on brand name drugs beginning in 2011, and complete closure of the donut hole within 10 years. A typical beneficiary who enters the donut hole will see savings of more than \$700 in 2011 and more than \$3,000 by 2020.

Better coverage, tax credits for families, small businesses

- Improve coverage for residents with health insurance.
- Give tax credits, other assistance to help families and small businesses afford coverage.
- Extend coverage to uninsured residents.
- Guarantee coverage for residents with pre-existing conditions.
- Protect families from bankruptcy due to unaffordable health care costs.
- Allow young adults to obtain coverage on their parents' insurance plans.
- Reduce the cost of uncompensated care for hospitals and other health care providers by \$38 million annually.

The following websites offer good information on how the new legislation could affect you:

1. The Kaiser Family Foundation: www.kff/healthreform.org
2. U.S. government: www.healthcare.gov/law.gov
3. National Coalition on Health Care: www.nchc.org

Submitted by Judy Samuelson, Chair Health Committee