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# COOPER INTRODUCES LANDMARK HEALTH CARE REFORM LEGISLATION

Bipartisan bill offers affordable, private health coverage choices for all Americans

WASHINGTON-U.S. Congressman Jim Cooper and 18 bipartisan colleagues today introduced legislation that will repair the nation's broken health care system. The Healthy Americans Act will enable every American to buy affordable, private health insurance while streamlining overall health care costs to the national economy.

"This landmark bill will provide health care to all Americans, regardless of age, region or pre-existing medical condition," said Cooper (D-TN). "It offers everyone choices-the opportunity to pick from a menu of coverage plans, just the way I do as a member of Congress. It's a tremendous breakthrough."

The Healthy Americans Act is the most bipartisan, comprehensive health reform bill in over 13 years. In addition to guaranteeing that every American can afford quality, private health insurance, the bill would: give Americans choice in where they get their health care; modernize the employer-employee relationship by making health care portable from job to job (and continue if you lose your job); promote personal responsibility and preventative medicine; and reform the insurance market so that insurers are forced to compete on price, benefits and quality.

The Healthy Americans Act was first introduced by Senators Ron Wyden (D-OR) and Bob Bennett (R-UT), and is cosponsored by a bipartisan group of 16 senators, including Senators Lamar Alexander (R-TN) and Bob Corker (R-TN). The lead House sponsors are Congresswomen Debbie Wasserman-Schultz (D-FL) and Jo Ann Emerson (R-MO).

"Jim Cooper was a pioneer in forging bipartisan consensus around health reform in the 1990's," said Wyden. "He's widely respected for his expertise in health care and budget issues, and I'm thrilled to have him as one of the driving forces in the House behind the Healthy Americans Act."

The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) and the Joint Committee on Taxation released a report that found the Healthy Americans Act would be roughly budget-neutral in 2014 and that implementing the Act would actually create surpluses after that year. Further proof of the bill's financial benefits was provided by an independent analysis conducted by the non-partisan Lewin Group, the gold standard of health care policy analysis. The analysis estimates that covering all Americans, the Healthy Americans Act could save more than \$1.5 trillion in health care spending over the next 10 years.

"This bill will provide affordable, transportable, user-friendly health insurance to all Americans, and it will save our country money in the long run," said Cooper. "If we work across party lines, I'm confident we can make health reform happen after the next president takes office. In hard economic times, with medical bills causing thousands to declare bankruptcy, Americans can't afford for us to wait."

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Photos of Wednesday  
press conference available upon request.