

Using NewsHour Extra Feature Stories

STORY

Fixing the Health Care System Tops President's Agenda, 06/26/2009

http://www.pbs.org/newshour/extra/features/health/jan-june09/healthcare_06-26.html

Estimated Time: One 45-minute class period with possible extension

[Student Worksheet](#) (reading comprehension and discussion questions without answers)

PROCEDURE

1. WARM UP

Use initiating questions to introduce the topic and find out how much your students know.

2. MAIN ACTIVITY

Have students read NewsHour Extra's feature story and answer the reading comprehension and discussion questions on the student handout.

3. DISCUSSION

Use discussion questions to encourage students to think about how the issues outlined in the story affect their lives and express and debate different opinions.]

INITIATING QUESTIONS

1. **What is health care? How does it work?**

2. **Can you name other health care systems in the world? How are they different?**

READING COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS – [Student Worksheet](#)

1. **How is President Obama organizing around health care reform?**

ANSWER

President Obama is trying to build a coalition of doctors, hospitals, insurance companies and politicians to support his plan for health care reform.

2. **What are the key parts of his plan?**

ANSWER

The president's plan argues for an alternative to private medical insurance (supporters call it a "public plan," opponents call it a "government-run plan"), evidence-based medical analysis and streamlining of medical practices as cost-saving tactics.

3. **How many people currently have no health insurance?**

ANSWER

There are currently 45.7 million people without insurance, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. In addition, the economic downturn is causing job losses that strip insurance from 14,000 Americans a day, according to the White House.

4. **What does the administration want to see in the bill that comes through Congress?**

ANSWER

The White House is trying to push a bill through Congress that could cover all Americans (called universal health care) or at least a governmental option for those without health care.

5. How do most Americans get covered under health insurance?

ANSWER

Most Americans receive some sort of health care coverage through their employers. Health insurance is a “benefit” that companies use to entice workers. Employees often pay to cover their spouses and children as well.

6. What is CHIP? What is Medicaid?

ANSWER

CHIP is free or low-cost health insurance for uninsured children, also known as Children's Health Insurance Program.

Medicaid is an insurance program funded jointly by the federal and state governments available for individuals and families with limited incomes or resources.

7. When was the last big congressional push for health care reform? Who led it?

ANSWER

President Clinton, 15 years ago, named health care reform as a top domestic issue and appointed his wife, now Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, to head up the health care task force.

8. How will this new health care bill be funded?

ANSWER

Senate negotiators working with President Obama said this week they were closing in on a \$1 trillion, 10-year health care plan that could be fully funded by tax increases and Medicare cuts.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (more research might be needed)

1. Do you think that the United States should have universal health care? Why or why not?

2. Why do you think that both President Obama and former President Clinton made health care reform their number one domestic issue?

3. How would not having insurance affect someone's life if they got sick?

4. What do you think is the number one issue facing the nation? Use specific examples explain your answer.

Extension Activity

Have students write a 300-500 word essay on this topic providing clear examples. Send your completed editorial to NewsHour Extra (extra@newshour.org). Exceptional essays might be published on our Web site.