

Using NewsHour Extra Feature Stories

STORY

President Obama Unveils New Plan Ahead of Health Care Summit, 02/23/2010

http://www.pbs.org/newshour/extra/features/us/jan-june10/healthcare_02-23.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 insurance?

2. How do most people get health insurance?

READING COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS – **Student Worksheet**

1. What does President Obama hope to do with his health care reform bill?

ANSWER

President Barack Obama has offered a reform proposal to jump start a bipartisan health care summit at the White House this week.

2. Why does the president's plan anger some Republicans?

ANSWER

The president's plan, which is based on the Senate proposal that passed in December, has angered Republicans who say Congress needs to start all over again.

Minority Leader John Boehner said the President is "proposing the same massive government takeover of health care based on a partisan bill the American people have already rejected."

3. What is the major change in this plan?

ANSWER

One of the biggest changes in the president's proposal is the creation of a Health Insurance Rate Authority, a government body to help oversee insurance programs.

4. Name one similarity and one difference between car insurance and health insurance.

ANSWER

The insurance company makes money off of healthy people who don't have to go the doctor, but loses money on sick people who need a lot of care, just as the car insurance company makes money off of drivers who never have a crash, but loses it on drivers who get into big accidents.

Unlike car insurance, however, most people in the United States get health insurance from their employers.

5. Why do some employers refuse to pay for health care coverage for their workers?

ANSWER

Since health insurance premiums-- the money that companies pay for coverage-- have skyrocketed in the last 10 years, more and more companies have stopped paying for their employees' insurance.

This has left millions of people without insurance.

6. How can an individual's lack of insurance affect the pricing of another individual's insurance?

ANSWER

Many uninsured people don't go to the doctor for checkups because it is too expensive, so they end up in hospital emergency rooms when their health problems get severe.

By law, emergency care can not be withheld. The money to pay for this care comes from increasing the price of health care for everyone, according to experts.

7. Why might the health care summit help Democrats?

ANSWER

Some strategists see the televised summit as a way for the Democrats to publicly push some of the responsibility for health care reform onto the shoulders of Republicans ahead of the mid-term elections.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (more research might be needed)

1. Why do you think health care is so important in the United States?

2. Do you think that the government should be in the business of providing health care to some or all of its citizens? Why or why not?

3. Many countries around the world have universal health care. Do you think the United States should adopt universal health care? Why or why not?

4. Is health care a human right? Why or why not?

5. Currently, most insured people receive health care coverage through their employer. Can you think of another way to receive health care? What are the benefits of that system?

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.