

# Will President Bush's Budget Pay for America's Priorities?

## Will the President's Budget Prioritize Health Care?

*Today, President Bush spoke of the government's responsibility to meet the health care needs of the poor, elderly and disabled, and of the goal of making sure all Americans can afford insurance. Speaking in New York, he said: "Listen, federal government has an important role to play when it comes to health care, and that is to help the poor and the disabled and the elderly. And we're keeping those obligations." In fact, in his past budgets, the President has not met those obligations. Next week, he has an opportunity to make health care a priority in his 2008 budget instead of providing vast give-aways to corporations and multimillionaires at the expense of programs that have helped Americans obtain quality health care. This year, Democrats call on the President to join us in moving in a new direction.*

### Why America Needs a Budget that Prioritizes Health Care:

- **The Number of Uninsured and Underinsured Americans Continues to Grow.** "On top of the 46.6 million uninsured Americans, about 16 million people are underinsured, which means their health coverage does not adequately protect them from catastrophic health care expenses. Underinsured Americans are almost as likely as the uninsured to not receive needed medical care." [Schoen et al., Health Affairs, June 14, 2005]
- **The Number of Uninsured Children Has Started to Increase.** "For the first time since 1998, the number of children younger than 18 without health coverage ticked upward last year by 361,000, along with the overall increase in the ranks of the uninsured, according to census figures released last week. Of the nation's nearly 74 million children, about 8.3 million, or 11.2 percent, lacked coverage in 2005, up from 10.8 percent the year before." [*The Washington Post*, 09/05/06]
- **The U.S. Is Still Ill Prepared for an Outbreak of Avian Influenza.** "Almost half the states have not spent any of their own money yet to gird against a super-flu, relying instead on grants from the federal government." [*Orlando, Sentinel*, [1/28/07](#)]
- **Racial and Economic Health Disparities Continue to Worsen.** "Numerous studies have found that members of racial and ethnic minorities have less access to care, receive less and poorer quality treatment, and experience worse health outcomes than the non-minority population." [UPI, [1/29/07](#)]

### How President Bush's Last Budget Failed to Help with America's Health Care Crisis:

- **President Bush Cut \$5.1 Billion Over Ten Years from Medicaid.** "The budget also contains new cuts in Medicaid, which provides health insurance to low-income children, parents, seniors, and people with disabilities. The budget

proposes legislative changes in Medicaid that would reduce federal Medicaid funding by a net of \$1.5 billion over five years and \$5.1 billion over ten years, as well as regulatory changes that would reduce federal funding by an additional \$12.2 billion over five years. (No ten-year figure is provided for the regulatory changes.) A substantial majority of these Medicaid changes would be achieved by shifting costs to states. That likely would induce many states to reduce eligibility or scale back health benefits for low-income Medicaid beneficiaries, possibly by using the authority that the just-passed budget reconciliation bill gives states to increase co-payments, impose premiums, and narrow the health services that Medicaid covers.” [*Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, The President’s Budget: A Preliminary Analysis, 2/10/06*]

- **President Bush Cut Rural Health Programs by \$133 million.** [President’s FY07 Budget]
- **Inadequate Funding for the National Institutes of Health.** The National Institutes of Health (NIH) are the leading source of basic biomedical research funding and have played an essential role in improving health and extending lives. President Bush not only signed into law the first cut to NIH funding since 1970, but also proposed to cut funding for 18 of the 19 institutes in his Fiscal Year 2007 budget. This includes cuts to the institutes conducting research on cancer, heart disease, and diabetes. Total NIH funding for Fiscal Year 2007 would remain the same as Fiscal Year 2006, but the total number of research grants that NIH could fund with this funding level would drop by 642, or 2 percent, below last year’s level. [President Bush FY 2007 Budget]
- **President Bush Cut Funding for Children’s Health Care.** “Mr. Bush will propose eliminating programs to treat people with traumatic brain injuries and to improve emergency medical services for children.” [*New York Times, 2/5/06*]
- **President Bush cut the Children’s Hospitals Graduate Medical Education (GME) program by \$198 million – from \$297 million in Fiscal Year 2006 to \$99 million in Fiscal Year 2007.** [President’s FY07 Budget]

**This year, will the President’s budget help families obtain affordable, quality health care? Will the President’s budget provide all American children with quality health care?**