



Health Care

Government funds about two-thirds of health care spending. It's had a large and beneficial role in health care for many decades, through Medicare for seniors; Medicaid to insure low-income Americans; the VA to treat military veterans; the Defense Department to treat active-duty military and their families; and the Children's Health Insurance Program to insure low-income children. These programs provide an essential safety net for our most vulnerable citizens or for those who defend or have defended us. And millions of working Americans are insured through their employers.

I voted for the Affordable Care Act (ACA) to bring coverage to millions of uninsured and underinsured Americans. Fifty million had no insurance, so the Affordable Care Act has filled in the gap, while also prohibiting the abuses of private insurers. Since passage of the ACA, 90% of Americans now have health insurance. Expanded Medicaid uses federal funds from the ACA to treat people with addiction to drugs such as opioids and heroin, and mental illness, as well as covering long-term nursing home care.

The health care law prevents discrimination against women, people with pre-existing conditions, and older Americans. It ensures that young adults can stay on their parents' plans until the age of 26, which has already extended coverage to more than 10,000 young people in New Hampshire and 15 million nationwide. It also eliminates annual and lifetime limits, so now, if your family member is sick, the insurance company can no longer refuse to pay past a certain dollar amount. Also, before the law passed, we were all paying extra for nonpayers, who often ended up in emergency rooms and left taxpayers footing the bill. Addressing this problem while keeping the private insurance market was originally a Republican idea, and was piloted by then-Governor Romney.

The law has the support of leading organizations in the health care industry, groups such as the American Medical Association, the American Cancer Society, and many others that work directly with patients. Organizations like Small Business Majority and AARP are also actively supporting it. There are a total of 5 insurers offering more than 60 plans on the New Hampshire Marketplace. Lack of insurer competition in New Hampshire had been a problem for decades, but now the health care law is reversing that trend. I pushed to bring new choices to the Marketplace, and I'm proud of the work I did. While I have always supported health care reform, I have never said this law is perfect. I would have preferred a public option—Medicare you can buy into—and I was disappointed with the rollout, especially the website and the fact that NH initially had only one insurer. It was outrageous when Anthem left ten hospitals out of its network, including Frisbie, Parkland, and Portsmouth. I fought to make sure that insurance companies must actively prove they have enough doctors and hospitals in their networks, and succeeded.

Unfortunately, years of efforts to thwart and undermine the law (including over 60 votes for repeal) also made the rollout more difficult than it should have been. Since it was passed, House Republicans have spent much of their time trying to obstruct, defund, and repeal the law, making a tough job even more difficult. Americans are still waiting to see Republicans' elusive alternative "health care plan."

Although much needs to be done to fix the health care law, we can't go back to the old system, because insurers must not be allowed to write all the rules and leave so many millions behind.

I call on Republicans in Congress to stop trying to repeal the ACA and work in a bipartisan manner to strengthen it.

***Carol Shea-Porter for Congress * PO Box 453 * Rochester, NH * 03866**
info@sheaporter.com * www.sheaporter.com * 603-531-9653

Authorized for by Carol Shea-Porter for Congress