



## **Senate Democrats Took on Drug Companies to Lower Cost of Medicine, Expand Affordable Health Care for Americans**

Senate Democrats have put the health of the American people first by taking several steps to lower costs, protect access, and expand availability of care.

### **Lowering Prescription Drug Costs**

Democrats took on Big Pharma and won— delivering historic action to lower prescription drug costs in the Inflation Reduction Act by allowing – for the first time – Medicare to negotiate drug prices.

**Starting January 1, 2023, Medicare beneficiaries will see the cost of their insulin capped at \$35 per month and drug companies will be penalized for raising their prices above inflation.**

The law also caps out-of-pocket prescription drug costs for Medicare beneficiaries and provides recommended vaccines for seniors under Medicare for free.

Through these historic reforms, seniors and people with disabilities nationwide will no longer be forced to pay several thousands of dollars out of pocket for a single drug. Democrats won't stop until the cost of medicine is affordable for all Americans.

### **Fighting COVID-19**

Democrats have increased access to COVID-19 vaccines, testing, and treatments, and will continue taking action to fight COVID-19 and save lives, helping to lower the COVID-19 death rate by 90% since President Biden took office. The American Rescue Plan included \$50 billion for testing, contact tracing, and personal protective equipment, including tracking of COVID-19 variants, and another \$20 billion for vaccine administration and distribution.

### **Strengthening Public Health and Health Care Infrastructure**

Democrats provided substantial funding to strengthen public health infrastructure to respond to not just the COVID-19 pandemic, but other emerging health threats through the American Rescue Plan Act. The Act provided funding for nationwide vaccination programs, vaccine confidence activities, data modernization, and assistance to state, local, territorial, and Tribal governments.

Through the American Rescue Plan, Democrats also supported the public health and health care workforce at the federal, state, and local levels, including funding to recruit, train, and retain new health workers. Democrats also created new programs to develop

the behavioral health workforce and increase the number of providers who care for underserved and geographically isolated populations, as well as programs to support the well-being of health providers and public safety officers.

### **Funding Behavioral Health Care**

The Bipartisan Safer Communities Act expanded high quality community mental health and substance use disorder services nationwide through the Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics program. Over 500 clinics operate in 42 states, with 10 states currently receiving full federal reimbursement – with this expansion, all states now have the opportunity to apply for full federal support. These clinics dramatically reduce emergency department visits, time in jails, and homelessness rates. The bill also made significant investments to improve access to mental health services for children, youth, and families, including via telehealth, as well as to programs that expand provider training in mental health, support suicide prevention, and provide crisis and trauma intervention and recovery.

Congress also passed the Dr. Lorna Breen Health Care Provider Protection Act, creating new grant programs to expand health care providers' access to mental health and substance use disorder services and supports.

### **Ensuring Access to Affordable Health Care**

Democrats ensured access to affordable, quality health insurance for millions of Americans by extending expanded premium tax credits through 2025 in the Inflation Reduction Act. These premium tax credits were first expanded in the American Rescue Plan Act.

These affordability improvements increased health coverage, prompting a record 14.5 million people to select marketplace plans during the 2022 open enrollment period, up from 12 million in 2021 and 11.4 million in 2020.

**Thanks to these investments and other Administration actions, the national uninsured rate reached an all-time low of 8% in early 2022, with 5.2 million people having gained coverage since 2020.**

The Inflation Reduction Act also increased help for low-income seniors, giving all qualifying Medicare beneficiaries the full low-income subsidy under Medicare Part D and retaining affordable Medicare premiums. Democrats also provided incentives for states to expand Medicaid by increasing federal supports, which could provide health insurance coverage to nearly 4 million Americans if expanded nationwide. States also received the option to extend Medicaid postpartum eligibility to 12 months – allowing for more stability in care for mothers and their children.