

Washington, D.C. - U.S. Rep. David Price (D-NC), today issued the following statement on H.R. 3200, America's Health Choices Act, which was introduced this week by key committees in the House of Representatives:

Our nation is the home of the world's premiere medical research and development enterprise and its most advanced medical technology. The Research Triangle is at the forefront of much of this work—to cure cancer, treat chronic diseases, and train world-class health care providers. But our best efforts to prevent disease and improve treatment are not translating into more affordable and accessible health care. Today, there are nearly 50 million Americans who don't have basic health insurance, and even those who do often face rising costs and cannot be certain that their current coverage will meet their future needs.

Since the uninsured drive up costs for everyone, our country is paying a steep price for our failure to address this crisis—an estimated \$100 billion every year. That translates into an average annual surcharge of \$1017 that insured families are currently paying to subsidize the care of the uninsured. Rising health care costs are crushing the budgets of families and businesses, making us less competitive in the global economy, putting Medicare in jeopardy, and hurting our nation's long-term fiscal sustainability. Although taking action will not be easy, we simply cannot afford the cost of inaction.

It's time we fix what's broken—but we've got to do it without breaking what's already working well. This week, key committees in the House of Representatives released their draft of legislation to do just that. H.R. 3200, America's Affordable Health Choices Act, would reform our nation's health care system to provide stability for American families: coverage that cannot be taken away, costs that will not threaten family finances or put insurance out of reach, and quality care that lets people choose their own doctors.

H.R. 3200 will provide:

More Choices:

- If you like your current plan, you can keep it.

- If you are not insured or want to change your current plan, the bill would establish a health care exchange where consumers can select from a menu of affordable, quality health care options: either a private insurance plan or a new public health insurance plan.

- People will have similar choices to what federal employees, including members of Congress, have.

Better Quality:

- The bill will ensure that Americans of all ages have access to greater quality of care by providing better preventative and wellness care, and strengthening existing programs.

- Every child in America will have health care coverage that includes dental and vision benefits, and the legislation will ensure that more doctors and nurses are available to provide quality care as more Americans get coverage.

- Critically, the bill also will close the Medicare prescription "doughnut hole" that causes so many of our seniors to have to choose between food and their medications.

Stable, Affordable Coverage:

- Americans will have portable, secure health care plans and will no longer have to worry about losing coverage for themselves and their families if their employer drops their plan or they lose their job.

- Insurance companies will no longer be able to deny Americans based on pre-existing conditions, age, race, or gender.

PRICE STATEMENT ON AMERICA'S AFFORDABLE HEALTH CHOICES ACT

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- The bill will also eliminate copays for preventative care, cap patients' out-of-pocket expenses, and guarantee catastrophic coverage that protects every American from bankruptcy.

The legislation marks the first step of a commitment made by President Obama and Congress to provide stable, sustainable health care for Americans now and for the next generation. In the weeks ahead, the bill will go through many more refinements and alterations as the debate proceeds. I will continue to monitor committee deliberations and to participate actively in the discussions shaping the bill. I welcome your comments as this process moves forward.

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