

## American College of Physicians: America's health care system in state of decline

February 17 2010

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"The unfortunate truth is that by many measures, the State of America's health care is in decline," Joseph W. Stubbs, MD, FACP, president of the American College of Physicians (ACP), reported today at ACP's annual State of the Nation's Health Care briefing. "We have too many uninsured, too few primary care physicians, and the cost of health care is rising faster than we can afford."

"[Health care](#) in the United States is facing an unprecedented challenge of affordability and sustainability," continued Dr. Stubbs. "Yet a highly-partisan and polarized debate over [health care reform](#) legislation regrettably has taken the country's 'eye off the ball'—from the urgency of implementing reforms."

In its report issued today, ACP detailed the dire consequences the country would face if Congress and the President failed to enact comprehensive health care reform.

"For decades, we have seen Washington politicians decide that health care reform is too hard, and we may be on the brink of seeing this happen once again," observed Bob Doherty, ACP's Senior Vice President of Governmental Affairs and Public Policy. "But this time, we know what the consequences will be. Affordable health care will be out of reach for many middle class families. One out of five of us will be uninsured. We won't be able to find a primary care doctor. And increased Medicare and Medicaid spending will create an unprecedented fiscal and budget crisis."

As a path for moving forward on health care reform ACP recommended that:

- Congress and the President reach an agreement on a legislative pathway to enact a final bill and builds upon—and improves upon—the bills already passed by both houses of Congress;
- President Obama should reach out to both Republican and Democratic members of Congress to develop bipartisan proposals to reduce the costs associated with the medical liability tort system, and to work together on other issues that have support across the political parties, such as increasing the numbers of [primary care physicians](#);
- Congress should give preferred funding for discretionary programs to advance the goals of expanding coverage, ensure a sufficient supply of primary care physicians, and encourage testing and dissemination of models to improve health care delivery;
- Congress must permanently end the cycle of Medicare physician payment cuts caused by the Sustainable Growth Rate (SGR) formula; and,
- President Obama should use his executive authority to require that all health-related federal agencies and private sector contractors develop plans to increase the numbers of primary care physicians and reduce the time that clinicians and patients spend on health plan administration.

"The alternative to moving forward on comprehensive health reform is an unconscionable abdication of responsibility by our elected leaders to

ensure that high quality health care remains available and affordable for American families today, tomorrow and for years to come," concluded Dr. Stubbs.

**More information:** [www.acponline.org](http://www.acponline.org)

Provided by American College of Physicians

Citation: American College of Physicians: America's health care system in state of decline (2010, February 17) retrieved 24 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2010-02-american-college-physicians-america-health.html>

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