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GEORGE BUSH ON HEALTH CARE FACT SHEET

The American health care system can provide the best health services in the world. People from all over the globe come to America for treatment by our doctors and hospitals. Our medical schools, medical research, and medical personnel are without parallel.

Most Americans have complete access to care, and for difficult problems where you really need a medical system, the American system is far better than any in the world. The answer is not to take giant steps backwards in quality of care to deal with access problems for the poor and the uninsured, but to continually improve the excellent American system and to give every American a plastic card and access to our health system.

Instead of taking untested, costly risks by requiring all employers, including schools, hospitals, and small non-profit organizations, to assume expensive new burdens, George Bush will work to address each segment of the problem. By taking these careful steps, he will protect those with sound benefits today, while improving the reach of both public and private programs. He will avoid bankrupting our people, our employers, and our government.

George Bush is committed to:

- o improving the availability of health and long term care benefits through incentives;
- o improving care for lower income Americans through focusing on the populations most at risk, young mothers and their babies;
- o improving the availability of coverage for people with serious pre-existing conditions;
- o working with government, with doctors, hospitals, and other health care providers, and with beneficiaries and patients to find ways to keep costs down while maintaining high standards for quality care;
- o devoting the necessary resources to finding the causes and cures for major debilitating diseases, including Alzheimer's disease, osteoporosis, cancer, heart disease, and AIDS;
- o working with all Americans to understand the importance of prevention of illness as the most important single element in leading long, healthy, and productive lives.

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GEORGE BUSH SUPPORTS FOCUSED EFFORTS THAT WILL BE EFFECTIVE IN PROVIDING EVERY AMERICAN ACCESS TO HIGH QUALITY CARE

- o George Bush will work to increase the availability of employer-based health care through incentives to employers, such as continued deductibility and clarification of the IRS interpretation on reserves.
- o George Bush supports allowing low income workers to purchase Medicaid coverage.
- o He will vigorously enforce the anti-patient dumping law that prohibits hospitals from refusing to treat patients based on ability to pay.
- o George Bush will increase coverage of lower income Americans, especially children. George Bush supports mandatory Medicaid coverage for prenatal and infant services and will work to see that states adopt coverage for older children.
- o George Bush supports special efforts directed toward young mothers and high-risk pregnancies through case management.
- o He will work with the states to reform antiquated tort laws that artificially increase the costs of medical care and limit access to care, especially in rural areas.
- o And, he will vigorously enforce the survey and certification requirements to ensure high quality nursing home care and to prohibit discrimination against Medicaid patients.

Health care is one of the most complex and important subjects in public policy today. George Bush will not support a standardized benefit package mandated by the federal government, one that removes employee choice and will ultimately cost millions more than providing good health care should.

George Bush believes that individual workers and their employers should have the authority to develop the benefit packages that make the most sense. Mandated benefits make part-time workers more expensive, just at a time when more workers are demanding flexible schedules and job sharing.

Mandated benefits make low wage workers proportionately more expensive than other employees. Mandated benefits increase the start up costs for new businesses -- the source of most new job creation, and lessens the flexibility of employers and employees to establish a compensation package that best meets the needs of workers.

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Helping small employers gain information about their health insurance options and facilitating their grouping together to purchase insurance at lower prices are strategies that should be explored before turning to an anti-competitive measure like mandated benefits.

GEORGE BUSH SUPPORTS EFFORTS TO FIND WAYS TO KEEP MEDICAL COSTS DOWN WHILE MAINTAINING HIGH STANDARDS FOR QUALITY CARE

- o We must insure that government health programs such as Medicare and Medicaid will not pay for waste and inefficiency--saving these needed dollars to care for our older and low-income Americans.
- o We need to do more to promote the option of enrolling in innovative, and cost-effective plans such as Health Maintenance Organizations (HMO) and Preferred Provider Organizations (PPO), and to induce competition among health care providers.

A BUSH ADMINISTRATION WILL WORK TO PROVIDE COVERAGE OF THE COSTS OF SERIOUS, LONG-TERM CARE FOR OUR SENIORS

Our seniors and others in need of long-term care must be free from financial ruin because of catastrophic illness, and we must look for innovative solutions to the problem of long-term care. Today, 1.5 million Americans are in nursing homes; many more are cared for at home.

George Bush will work to ensure that the cost of this care does not tear families apart. His program will be fiscally responsible.

- o We must change the tax code to provide incentives for those who can afford to pay for long-term care using group plan insurance.
- o We must allow conversion of IRAs, savings accounts and life insurance so people can pay for long-term health care.
- o For those seniors who cannot afford long-term care insurance, George Bush supports changing Medicaid requirements that force people to "spend down" their life savings before being eligible for assistance.
- o In order to eliminate the major causes of long-term, chronic disability, George Bush strongly believes in adequate funding for research on diseases such as Alzheimers, osteoporosis and strokes. Billions of dollars in health care costs and heartbreak will be saved through research, prevention and a cure for such illnesses.

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George Bush believes we must commit the resources and the will to find a cure for AIDS.

Continued research on the AIDS virus combined with public education and voluntary testing are the best methods to curb the spread of AIDS.

- o Our government spent over \$750 million last year; we will spend over to \$1.4 billion this year on AIDS and we have proposed 2.0 billion for next year. And, as we look into the future, we may have to spend more.
- o We must encourage our schools, communities, and churches to become involved in preventive education efforts. The federal government has a critical role in providing parents and students essential facts about AIDS and what they can do to protect themselves.
- o We must also encourage states to offer voluntary testing of AIDS patients. If society, however, feels compelled to test its citizens, then it is absolutely necessary that those records are kept confidential.
- o George Bush believes we must ensure against discrimination, particularly in our schools and the workplace. Persons with AIDS must be allowed to work as long as they are functionally capable.

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