

# SENATOR, TENNESSEANS WANT SMART CHOICES

## WE WANT NATIONAL HEALTH CARE REFORM THAT INCLUDES A PUBLIC PLAN CHOICE

By fueling market competition, a public plan choice will save us up to 30%.

### AVERAGE ANNUAL PREMIUMS with public health insurance choice<sup>1</sup>

Public Plan Option \$2,904

Private Plans

\$4,164

- **Premiums would initially be (up to) 30% less** than premiums for comparable private coverage, thus, would fuel healthy competition.<sup>2</sup>
- **Public plan premiums 20%-30% lower** than traditional fee-for-service insurance."<sup>3</sup>
- **People who chose to keep their private insurance would save, too**, because for-profit insurers would have to provide better value to compete.<sup>4</sup>
- **Public option provides a real safety net for all Americans.** Whether people choose the public health insurance option or private coverage, we'll always have access to high-quality insurance and a choice of doctors.<sup>5</sup>
- **59% of small business owners support a public plan option.**<sup>6</sup>

*In my own words, here's why a public plan choice matters to me:*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

, TN

1. "The Path to a High Performance U.S. Health System," The Commonwealth Fund, February 19, 2009 ; 2. "The Cost and Coverage Impacts of a Public Plan: Alternative Design Options," The Lewin Group, April 6, 2009; 3. "The Path to a High Performance U.S. Health System," The Commonwealth Fund, February 19, 2009 ; 4. "Why a Public Health Insurance Option?" Institute for America's Future, 2008 ; 5. *Ibid.*  
6. Main Street Alliance, 2009; [http://mainstreetalliance.org/wordpress/wpcontent/uploads/2009\\_01\\_15\\_Taking\\_the\\_Pulse\\_of\\_Main\\_Street.pdf](http://mainstreetalliance.org/wordpress/wpcontent/uploads/2009_01_15_Taking_the_Pulse_of_Main_Street.pdf)

### **How to use this flier:**

- 1) **Fax the flier w/your personal message to Sen. Alexander & Sen. Corker;**
- 2) **Email your personal message, w/ Subject Line: Support Public Plan Option (or similar);**
- 3) **Hand it to the senators at upcoming public meetings in TN, or if you plan to go to DC to lobby them for national health care reform.**

**Sen. Alexander's fax: 202-228-3398 ; Sen. Corker's fax: 202-228-0566**

Email through online form: <http://alexander.senate.gov/public/> ; <http://corker.senate.gov/public/>

Full contact info for Sen. Alexander & Sen. Corker @ [www.thcc2.org](http://www.thcc2.org) "Take Action" section

### **What is a public plan choice?**

Jacob Hacker of the Institute for America's Future gives this definition: *In essence, public plan choice is simple. Many reform plans envision the creation of new national or regional purchasing pools. Such pools, often called "exchanges," allow those without good employment-based insurance to choose among large private health plans, providing a basis for group pooling of medical risks similar to that provided by large employers. The public insurance option simply makes a public plan available alongside the private plans that can be enrolled in through the exchange. This plan will compete with private plans, ensuring an insurance product with broad choice of providers and encouraging private plans to match the administrative efficiencies, cost-control abilities, and quality-improvement capacities of public insurance.*

**Need help with your personal message?** Here are some talking points—pick one—don't use them all. *The important thing is to say what's on your mind as to why you want to see a public plan option.*

- 1) **Americans want common-sense solutions that work for all of us. Public plan choice** will give Americans the benefits of both public and private plans: flexibility and security, innovation and stability, and market and democratic accountability. According to opinion polling, this is what most Americans want: public and private insurance competing side by side so that we can choose the best option for our families and ourselves.
- 2) **Public insurance has a better track record than private insurance when it comes to reining in costs while preserving access.** For example, from 1997 - 2006, *health spending per enrollee (for comparable benefits) grew at 4.6 percent a year under Medicare, compared with 7.3 percent a year under private health insurance.* At the same time, Medicare has maintained high levels of provider participation and patient access to care.
- 3) **Public Insurance is less inexpensive to administer.** The public Medicare plan's administrative overhead costs (in the range of 3 percent) are well below the overhead costs of large companies that are self-insured (5 to 10 percent of premiums), companies in the small group market (25 to 27 percent of premiums), and individual insurance (40 percent of premiums).
- 4) **Public insurance has been more innovative than private insurance.** In the last decades, public insurance has pioneered new payment and quality-improvement methods that have frequently set the standard for private plans. And, it has the potential to carry out these vital tasks much more effectively in the future, using information technology, large databases of practices and outcomes, and new payment approaches and care-coordination strategies. National health care reform with a public plan option could spearhead improvement of existing public programs as well as private plans.
- 5) **Public plan choice fuels the competition that benefits American consumers.** Without a public plan competing with private plans, we will continue to lack strong mechanisms to rein in costs and drive value down the road. A new public plan alongside private plans will help unite the public around the principle of broadly shared risk while building greater confidence in government over the long term.

To give credit where it's due: Idea for this flier came from MoveOn. However, I've framed it better and geared it toward Tennessee's conservative senators, who would not be impressed with some of the initial content or source.