

**What the Finance Bill Means for Americans
from the Office of Senator Mitch McConnell
Tuesday, September 22, 2009**

'In short, if you have health insurance or you don't, you're taxed. If you seek preventive care, you're taxed. If you need a medical device, well that's taxed too. At a time when Americans are demanding lower health care costs, this plan would drive them higher'

WASHINGTON, D.C. - U.S. Senate Republican Leader Mitch McConnell made the following remarks on the Senate floor Tuesday regarding the importance of getting it right on health care reform:

"Today, the Senate Finance Committee will start to amend the health care proposal that its Chairman, Senator Baucus, released last week. Before that work begins, I think it's important to remind Americans what this plan would mean for them.

"Put simply, this plan calls for more and more government intrusion into health care and pays for it with \$350 billion in new taxes and hundreds of billions of dollars in Medicare cuts. So, in the name of cutting costs, this plan raises taxes on virtually every American who uses our health care system

"Here are some of the tax increases in this plan:

- If you have insurance, this plan taxes you in the form of a new tax on insurance companies, which will then be passed on to consumers.
- If you don't have insurance, this plan taxes you too by saying that the consequence of not maintaining insurance is an excise tax that could run as high as \$3,800.
- If you use a medical device like a hearing aid or an artificial heart, this plan taxes you, and it also includes new taxes on everything from MRIs to contact lenses.
- If you need laboratory tests for prevention, screening, or diagnosis, this plan taxes those too.
- If you're an employer who can't afford to provide health insurance to your employees, this plan taxes you — a tax that businesses across the country have warned could kill more jobs in the middle of a recession
- And, if you, like tens of millions of other Americans, take prescription drugs, this plan taxes you too.
- This plan also increases taxes on about one in ten family insurance policies according to one policy group, and this tax will extend to more and more plans over time.

"In short, if you have health insurance or you don't, you're taxed. If you seek preventive care, you're taxed. If you need a medical device, well that's taxed too. At a time when Americans are demanding lower health care costs, this plan would drive them higher.

"As I said earlier, this plan also contains hundreds of billions of dollars in Medicare cuts, which will hurt America's seniors.

"It contains nearly \$130 billion in cuts to Medicare Advantage, a program that gives 11 million seniors more choices and options when it comes to their health care. One Democrat senator described these cuts as 'intolerable.'

The President recently said that seniors currently on Medicare Advantage would be able to get coverage that's, quote, 'just as good.' Seniors want to keep the insurance they have.

"This plan contains nearly \$120 billion in Medicare cuts for hospitals that care for seniors — cuts that organizations like the Kentucky Hospital Association have warned against because of the negative affect they would have on services to seniors in Kentucky and other states.

"This plan includes more than \$40 billion in cuts to home health agencies that let seniors receive care in their homes, rather than having to go into a nursing home.

"And this plan contains nearly \$8 billion in cuts to Hospice care, a service that provides dignity and comfort to seniors at the end of life

"Everyone agrees that Medicare needs reform. But instead of trying to address the problems at hand, this plan uses Medicare as a piggy bank to pay for new government programs that could very well have the same fiscal problems that Medicare does.

"Americans want reforms that make care more affordable and that keep government out of health care decisions. They don't want a so-called reform that would actually make care more expensive and would put government bureaucrats in charge of health care decisions.

"Americans have sent a clear message to lawmakers in Washington over the past months: no more trillion-dollar programs and no more taxes. This plan for health care fails these tests. That's why it's so important for the Finance Committee to give this proposal serious and careful consideration. I've listed just a few of the things that concern people about this plan. With 564 amendments filed from both Democrats and Republicans, it's clear that we need to slow down and take the time necessary to address the serious, bipartisan concerns about this plan."