

# HEALTH CARE FOR AMERICA NOW!

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## **“Health Care for America Now” Thanks U.S. Rep. Steny Hoyer for His Leadership**

*Town Hall in 5<sup>th</sup> Congressional District Brings Out Call for Action Now*

*House Majority Leader: “America can’t afford to wait for health care reform.”*

Bowie, MD – On Monday, April 20 at Florian Hall in Bowie, MD, U.S. Representative and House of Representative Majority Leader Steny Hoyer held a Town Hall meeting on the topic of health care reform with hundreds of constituents in the 5<sup>th</sup> Congressional District. The Town Hall was broadcast live on C-SPAN and is available online at <http://cspan.org/Watch/watch.aspx?MediaId=HP-R-17632>.

The main theme to emerge from the Majority Leader’s remarks was that the need for action is urgent and, in fact, Congressional action is imminent. Standing in front of a sign reading “America can’t afford to wait for health care reform,” Mr. Hoyer said in his opening remarks, “We are here because we are all committed to health care reform this year. This year.” He went on to say, “This year marks the best opportunity in years, possible ever, to actually accomplish real reform of our health care system.” He spoke repeatedly of the urgency of action and of the intention of the Congressional Majority to take bold steps to grapple with the nation’s health care crisis.

Last year Rep. Hoyer was one of nine members of Congress from Maryland and nearly 200 nationwide to sign on to the [Health Care for America Now](#) (HCAN) statement of principles, declaring that they are on the side of quality, affordable health care for all and opposed to leaving Americans on their own with unregulated health insurance.

See the HCAN "Which Side Are You On?" statement here:  
[http://hcfan.3cdn.net/517370ec1fddf45044\\_vbm6ivw3d.pdf](http://hcfan.3cdn.net/517370ec1fddf45044_vbm6ivw3d.pdf)

Rep. Hoyer also addressed the emerging debate over the President’s insistence on the inclusion of a public health insurance option for all Americans in his reform proposal: “President Obama has indicated that he believes such an alternative is necessary. I share that view. ”

Health Care for America Now recently released new polling data examining Americans' attitudes about President Obama's call for giving all Americans the option of joining a new, public health insurance plan. The poll found that voters overwhelmingly (73%) want everyone to have a choice of private health insurance or a public health insurance plan, while just 15% prefer everyone having private health insurance and 9% support only public insurance. The preference for a choice of public and private health insurance plans extends across all demographic and partisan groups, including Democrats (77%), Independents (79%), and Republicans (63%).

Health Care for America Now is the largest campaign in American history in support of finally winning a federal guarantee of quality, affordable health care for all in the United States of America. HCAN comprises over 700 national organizations representing tens of millions of Americans, and the Maryland members of Health Care for America Now include:

- ACORN
- AFSCME
- Alliance for Retired Americans
- AFL-CIO
- American Academy of Pediatrics
- CASA de Maryland
- Maryland State Teachers Assn.
- Md. Health Care For All! Coalition
- Maryland Women's Coalition for Health Care Reform
- Montgomery Health Care Action
- NAACP of Maryland
- National Alliance on Mental Illness
- National Physicians Alliance
- Planned Parenthood of Maryland
- Progressive Maryland
- Service Employees Int'l Union (SEIU)
- United Food and Commercial Workers
- United Seniors of Maryland
- Union for Reform Judaism

"As the #2 leader of the United State House of Representatives, Majority Leader Hoyer's support for President Obama's health care plan is critical to its passage later this year," said Matthew Weinstein, Federal Issues Director for Progressive Maryland and state coordinator of Health Care for America Now.

America's broken health insurance system kills 18,000 Americans every year – one every half-hour – according to the Institute of Medicine of the National Academy of Sciences. According to the Baltimore Sun, in Maryland in 2007, 762,000 people didn't have health insurance, or 13.7 percent of the population. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 45.7 million Americans were uninsured last year, compared to 38.4 million in 2000, a 19% increase. From 2000 to 2007, health insurance premiums in Maryland increased by more than 64% while median yearly wages rose only 21%. Maryland's median yearly wage in 2007 was only \$36,723, but the average health care premium for a family was \$11,960. In 2008, the average premium for family coverage in Maryland was \$13,068. By 2016, that number is expected to be almost \$24,000.

*Health Care for America Now ("HCAN"), a section 501(c)(4) issue advocacy organization, is a broad coalition of nonprofit and political organizations that are working to promote quality, affordable health care for all Americans. HCAN and each of its members conducts and funds only activities appropriate to its tax and election law status.*

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