



- HOME
- BLOG
- PUBLICATIONS
- RESEARCH
- MULTIMEDIA
- EXPERTS
- ABOUT

 Search

White House Allies Launch New Effort to Popularize Obamacare

Health Care
[Health Care > Obama Plan](#)
[Health Care > Politics](#)
[Email a Friend](#)
 Written By: [Sarah McIntosh](#)
 Publication date: 06/30/2010
 Publisher: The Heartland Institute

In response to flagging approval numbers, political allies of the White House have unveiled a new campaign to bolster support for President Obama's health care law.

The campaign is expected to spend around \$125 million dollars over the next five years in an effort to popularize the new health care regime.

Former Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle (D-SD) and Victoria Kennedy, widow of the late Sen. Ted Kennedy (D-MA), are expected to chair the campaign. Anita Dunn, a former White House communications director for President Obama, is consulting for the organization.

According to Michael Cannon, director of health policy studies at the Cato Institute, a Washington, DC-based think tank, the new activist group will work in tandem with the White House.

"The law's continued unpopularity and the fear of a voter backlash are prompting this new campaign," Cannon said. "Numerous media events and missives from the administration have been sent out, including a misleading flyer mailed to all fifty million Medicare beneficiaries at taxpayer expense."

Funded by Union Dollars

This new campaign is being run by the Health Information Center, established by Andrew Grossman, former head of the union-funded group Wal-Mart Watch. Grossman has been raising funds for his new organization by targeting major unions as well as corporations and foundations.

According to Cannon, as a registered nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization, the Center plans to establish an office in Washington, DC with a dozen or so staff. The organization and the White House have planned to host more than 100 events, with simultaneous ad campaigns, to "resell" the plan.

A second organization is also in the mix, which will use political advocacy to counteract negative representations of the law. That group will be a 501(c)(4) organization called the Health Information Campaign.

As a (c)(4) the group will be legally able to serve as a partisan advocacy organization, providing support for lawmakers who voted in favor of the legislation. Grossman will also be active in the second group.

Reselling Obamacare

Polls consistently show large majorities of Americans support repealing Obamacare, and the president has embarked on a national speaking campaign to promote the new law.

In a White House blog post, Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary Kathleen Sebelius wrote that Obama and seniors will "have a direct conversation about how the law will strengthen Medicare by improving benefits, lowering costs, and giving seniors and their doctors more control over their health care."

In mid-June Obama travelled to Maryland for a question-and-answer session on the Affordable Care Act. He claimed two generations ago millions of seniors went without basic health care, and he said the Affordable Care Act renews the promise of Medicare by keeping it "strong and solvent—today and tomorrow."

The telecast was targeted at older Americans and timed to coincide with the first batch of rebate checks, which provide \$250 to Medicare beneficiaries to pay for prescription drugs. The White House branded these events as "milestone moments" and said Obama will continue to make appearances to encourage support of the plan.

SUBSCRIBE

Subscribe Via Email

[Subscribe via Rss](#)

FEATURED VIDEO



The Heritage Foundation outlines the timeline for implementation of President Obama's health care law for individuals and small businesses.

THIS MONTH'S POLL

Health Care Poll

What's the worst aspect of President Obama's reform?

- The trillions in costs.
- The new taxes on small businesses.
- The individual mandate.
- The restriction of HSAs.
- The unfunded Medicaid expansion.
- The lack of a public option.

[View Results](#)

THIS WEEK'S EXPERT



Grace-Marie Turner is president of the Galen Institute, a public policy research organization that she founded in 1995 to promote an informed debate over free-market ideas for health reform.

Administration 'in Crisis Mode'

Christie Herrera, director of the Health and Human Services Task Force at the American Legislative Exchange Council, a nonpartisan membership association of state legislators, says the new campaign is a response to the public's strong rejection of the president's health care policies.

"This administration has been in crisis mode as the underbelly of this health reform law is exposed. The preliminary regulations reveal that 1-2 million health savings account owners may be forced to drop their policies, that more than half of those with employer-sponsored coverage will lose their health insurance, and that millions of seniors on Medicare Advantage will have their benefits slashed," Herrera said. "There's a lot of explaining to do."

'Stinker of a Law'

Herrera says the White House has put together a campaign to provide public relations support for the health care law. The effort will be headed by Stephanie Cutter, an experienced Democratic communications strategist.

A central component of Cutter's plan is to target older Americans, who are more likely than other age groups to vote in upcoming elections, Herrera says.

"The President and Congress have spent billions promoting a small-business tax credit that most small businesses won't qualify for, and a \$250 prescription drug rebate check that most seniors won't get," Herrera said. "Meanwhile, health care costs will skyrocket for employers and prescription drug premiums will go up for seniors. And now the activist left will spend \$125 million in an attempt to further promote this stinker of a law."

Countering Voter Backlash

Cannon says opponents of the health care law will have to watch out to prevent the White House or HHS from using taxpayer funds to fund propaganda campaigns.

"Thomas Jefferson wrote, 'To compel a man to furnish contributions of money for the propagation of opinions which he disbelieves and abhors, is sinful and tyrannical.'" The public should demand that the administration stop spending their tax dollars on pro-Obamacare propaganda," Cannon said.

As for the new union-funded organizations, Cannon maintains the public will treat these campaigns with skepticism.

"The left has now created a couple of organizations to promote Obamacare," Cannon said, "but the American people aren't buying it."

Sarah McIntosh (mcintosh.sarah@gmail.com) teaches constitutional law and American politics at Wichita State University in Kansas.

See more articles by Sarah McIntosh

Post a comment:

Name:
E-Mail:

Email will not be displayed, distributed or sold to third parties

Your Comment:



Verify the text in the image: (it is case-sensitive)

Submit



Complete bio
Articles by Grace-Marie Turner
Email Grace-Marie Turner

ABOUT THE HEARTLAND INSTITUTE

Consumers for Health Care Choices is a project of The Heartland Institute, a national nonprofit research and education organizations founded in 1985. (Read more)

Contact Us
Support this Site

MORE FROM THE HEARTLAND INSTITUTE

