

**SENATOR JEFF BINGAMAN  
HEALTH REFORM 2009**

**HEALTH INSURANCE EXCHANGES**

**Creating New Health Insurance “Exchanges”**

National health reform would create exchanges through which Americans can access insurance. An “exchange” is a mechanism -- a sort of “market place” -- that would be set up in each state under the direction of the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Exchanges will provide information to Americans as well as businesses about health care insurance packages, including everything from what each plan covers to how much it will cost. Americans will be able to select and purchase insurance through the exchange, but no one will be required to use this resource.

Exchanges would perform at least the following functions:

- ❖ Develop tools such as, but not limited to, websites that provide consumers with information on expected premiums and out of pocket expenses, the availability of in-network and out-of-network providers, and other consumer information as determined by the Exchange relating to individuals’ costs and expected experience. Exchanges might also facilitate the purchase of coverage for long-term care services;
- ❖ Includes health insurance options that provide real competition within the health insurance market;
- ❖ Provides access to tax credits to ensure health insurance is affordable;
- ❖ Determine whether an individual qualifies for Medicaid or the Children’s Health Insurance Program, and help that person enroll in the program;
- ❖ Establish procedures for certification, recertification and decertification of health plans; and
- ❖ Collect, analyze, and respond to enrollee complaints and concerns regarding the insurance coverage purchased through the exchange.