

**SENATOR JEFF BINGAMAN
HEALTH REFORM 2009**

INSURANCE MARKET REFORMS

Health Insurance Market Reforms

For too long, health insurance companies have gotten away with capping coverage at a limited annual or lifetime amount, dropping patients at will, or even denying coverage outright. National health reform would put an end to such practices, ensure that every American will be able to buy affordable health insurance and that no one will be denied coverage. In particular, reforms would include:

- ❖ **Prohibiting Discrimination Against Individual Participants and Beneficiaries Based on Health Status.** Insurance companies won't be able to discriminate against people who are sick or based on medical condition (including both physical and mental illnesses), claims experience, receipt of health care, medical history, genetic information, or disability. It specifically prohibits insurance companies from denying coverage for pre-existing conditions.
- ❖ **Guaranteeing Renewability of Coverage.** It would ensure that an insured individual could not be dropped by his/her insurer.
- ❖ **Insisting upon fair insurance premiums.** Insurance companies would be prohibited from charging higher premiums based on health status, gender, class of business, claims experience, or any other factor not specifically allowed.
- ❖ **Bringing Down the Cost of Health Care Coverage.** Health insurance companies would be required to share cost information, including how much of their premiums are applied to the cost of health care services, health care quality activities, and all other non-claim costs, such as marketing, shareholder profit, and administrative overhead.
- ❖ **Creating a health insurance "exchange" – or marketplace – that would provide Americans with a choice of health insurance options that meet safe-guards to ensure coverage is affordable and meaningful.**