

# Background Fact Sheet on Single Payer

1. **47.0 million Americans were uninsured in 2006.** (US Census Bureau)
2. **More than 18,000 adults die from lack of coverage annually,** according to the Institute of Medicine of the National Academy of Sciences.
3. **Tens of millions more are under-insured,** lacking adequate coverage for drugs, long term care or mental health services.
4. **After a lull in the mid 1990s, health care costs are again rising steeply.** The National Center for Health Statistics estimates that, absent major reform, health spending will reach 17.7% of GDP by 2012.
5. **Every other developed nation has some form of national health insurance,** yet U.S. health spending is far higher — 42% higher than in Switzerland, which has world's the second most expensive health care system, and 83% higher than in Canada (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development Health Database, 2002).
6. **At present, GOVERNMENT spending on health care in the U.S. is higher than TOTAL spending on health care in Canada.** (Health Affairs, July/August 2002)
7. **Single payer national health insurance would save at least \$350 billion annually** on paperwork and administration, enough to cover all of the uninsured and to upgrade coverage for Medicare enrollees and others who are under-insured. Studies by the Congressional Budget Office, the General Accounting Office and several private consulting firms all agree that NHI could assure universal, comprehensive coverage without increasing total health spending.
8. **No other reform can slash administrative costs.** Assertions that computerization or patchwork reforms will cut bureaucratic costs are not credible. Most health insurance claims are already computerized. Private insurers keep a big share of their premiums as overhead in every nation. Allowing them to continue playing a big role in health care guarantees high administrative costs.
9. **Surveys show surprisingly strong support for single payer NHI, even among groups that have long opposed it.** 59% of physicians now endorse single payer NHI, as do 40% of small business owners. Polls have long shown that a majority of Americans favor some form of NHI. (Annals of Internal Medicine, 2008)
10. **The current economic downturn strengthens the case for NHI.** States facing budget crises are cutting Medicaid and other social programs. They should instead use the vast administrative savings from a single payer program to implement universal coverage; NHI could pay for itself. NHI would also relieve the crisis for workers, unions and corporations grappling with skyrocketing premiums

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## Physicians for a National Health Program

29 E Madison Suite 602, Chicago, IL 60602

Phone (312) 782-6006 | Fax: (312) 782-6007 | email: [info@pnhp.org](mailto:info@pnhp.org)

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