

FACT SHEET: President Biden to Sign Executive Orders Strengthening Americans' Access to Quality, Affordable Health Care

January 28, 2021 • [Statements and Releases](#)

The Biden-Harris Administration will open a Special Enrollment Period for Americans to sign up for health coverage and roll back attacks on the Affordable Care Act, Medicaid, and access to reproductive health care

After four years of attempts to strip health care from millions of Americans, President Biden will sign two executive actions that will begin to restore and strengthen Americans' access to quality, affordable health care. The Biden-Harris administration will re-open enrollment to the Health Insurance Marketplace, take additional steps to strengthen Medicaid and the Affordable Care Act, and protect women's health. These actions demonstrate a strong commitment by the Biden-Harris Administration to protect and build on the Affordable Care Act, meet the health care needs created by the pandemic, reduce health care costs, protect access to reproductive health care, and make our health care system easier to navigate and more equitable.

For President Biden, this is personal. He believes that every American has a right to the peace of mind that comes with knowing they have access to affordable, quality health care. Because of the Affordable Care Act, [over 100 million people](#) no longer have to worry that an insurance company will deny coverage or charge higher premiums just because they have a pre-existing condition. Roughly [20 million additional Americans](#) obtained the security that comes with health insurance, and young people transitioning from school to a job can stay covered by their parents' plan until age 26.

As we continue to battle COVID-19, it is even more critical that Americans have meaningful access to affordable care. The actions the President is taking today complement the commitment he made in the American Rescue Plan to make health insurance coverage more affordable for millions of Americans. Reliable and affordable access to health insurance doesn't just benefit families' health; it is a critical source of economic security and peace of mind for all.

Today's actions include:

Strengthening Medicaid and the Affordable Care Act. This Executive Order takes critical steps to reverse attacks on and strengthen Medicaid and the Affordable Care Act, so they can continue to provide access to life-saving care for millions of Americans. Based on this Executive Order, it is expected that the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) will open HealthCare.gov for a "Special Enrollment Period," from February 15, 2021 – May 15, 2021. This Special Enrollment Period will give Americans that need health care coverage during this global pandemic the opportunity to sign up.

The President will also direct federal agencies to reconsider rules and other policies that limit Americans' access to health care, and consider actions that will protect and strengthen that access.

Agencies are directed to re-examine:

- Policies that undermine protections for people with pre-existing conditions, including complications related to COVID-19;
- Demonstrations and waivers under Medicaid and the ACA that may reduce coverage or undermine the programs, including work requirements;
- Policies that undermine the Health Insurance Marketplace or other markets for health insurance;
- Policies that make it more difficult to enroll in Medicaid and the ACA; and
- Policies that reduce affordability of coverage or financial assistance, including for dependents.

As part of their reviews, agencies will consider whether to take additional actions to strengthen and protect access to health care.

Protecting Women's Health at Home and Abroad. Across the country and around the world, people — particularly women, Black, Indigenous and other people of color, LGBTQ+ people, and those with low incomes — have been denied access to reproductive health care. President Biden is also issuing a Presidential Memorandum to protect and expand access to comprehensive reproductive health care. The memorandum reflects the policy of the Biden-Harris Administration to support women's and girls' sexual and reproductive health and rights in the United States, as well as globally. Like memoranda issued by President Clinton and President Obama before him, it immediately rescinds the global gag rule, also referred to as the Mexico City Policy, which bars international non-profits that provide abortion counseling or referrals from receiving U.S. funding. In recognition of the additional work necessary to protect access to reproductive health care, President Biden's memorandum also directs the Department of Health and Human Services to take immediate action to consider whether to rescind regulations under its Title X family planning program.

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