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THE WHITE HOUSE

PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH

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President Bush Strengthened America's Health Care System

President Bush enacted policies to help Americans receive the care they need at a price they can afford and also infused transparency and innovation into the health care system. The President instituted the most significant reforms to Medicare in nearly 40 years, most notably through a prescription drug benefit, which has provided more than 40 million Americans with better access to prescription drugs. The President also created tax-free Health Savings Accounts to help Americans take charge of their health care decision-making, and increased funding for medical research, which contributed to medical breakthroughs such as the development of the HPV cancer vaccine.

President Bush Reformed Medicare And Added A Prescription Drug Benefit

The President provided more than 40 million Americans with better access to prescription drugs through the market-based Medicare Prescription Drug Benefit. President Bush established competition among private drug plans, which contributed to a 40 percent decline in the actual average 2008 premiums for Medicare drug coverage compared to original estimates. Projected overall program spending between 2004 and 2013 is approximately \$240 billion lower, nearly 38 percent, than originally estimated. Furthermore, the President:

- Improved the quality of health care for Medicare beneficiaries by adding preventive screening programs to help diagnose illnesses earlier.
- Increased competition and choices by stabilizing and expanding private plan options through the Medicare Advantage program, and increased enrollment to nearly 10 million Americans. Increased private plan enrollment from 4.7 million in 2003 to nearly 10 million in 2008 (more than 20 percent of all Medicare beneficiaries). The Administration also ensured nearly every county in America has a private plan choice, many with zero dollar premiums and supplemental benefits.

President Bush Pursued Innovative Ways To Make Sure Our Health Care System Meets The Needs Of All Americans

The Administration developed policies that improved the Nation's health care system by making it more affordable, transparent, portable, and efficient. The President:

- Empowered Americans to take charge of their health care decision-making by establishing tax-free Health Savings Accounts (HSAs). This enabled more than six million Americans who have enrolled in HSA-eligible plans to save money tax-free for current and future medical expenses.
- **Infused transparency about price and quality into the health care system** and launched an initiative to make electronic health records available to most Americans within 10 years. **The President also directed Federal agencies to inform beneficiaries of the prices paid to doctors and hospitals and empowered Americans to find better value and better care, largely through increased competition, and he ordered Federal agencies to use improved health IT systems to facilitate the rapid exchange of electronic health information to improve the quality of care for Americans.**
- Helped provide treatment to nearly 17 million people by establishing or expanding more than 1,200 community health centers focused in high-poverty areas. Increased the number of patients treated at health centers by more than 60 percent, to nearly 17 million people, since 2001.
- Increased funding at the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the primary Federal agency for medical research, by more than 44 percent since 2001, and fulfilled the commitment to double the NIH budget over the five year period from 1998 to 2003. This contributed to breakthroughs such as the development of the HPV cancer

vaccine, advances in cell reprogramming, the development of the Cancer Genome Atlas, and the completion of the Human Genome Project.

- Expanded the Trade Adjustment Assistance program add a tax credit to help displaced workers afford health insurance.

President Bush Provided Unprecedented Resources For Veterans

The President transformed the veterans health care system to better serve those who have sacrificed for our freedom. He instituted reforms for the care of wounded warriors, many of which were based on the recommendations of the Dole-Shalala Commission, and dramatically expanded resources for mental health services. The President:

- Increased funding for veterans' medical care by more than 115 percent since 2001 and committed more than \$6 billion to modernize and expand VA medical facilities, ensuring more veterans could receive quality care close to home.
- Created a joint Department of Defense/VA Recovery Coordinator Program for seriously-injured service members.
- *Initiated a pilot program to replace the cumbersome system of two separate disability examinations with a single, comprehensive medical exam.*
- Expanded training, screening, and staff resources to help service members and veterans suffering from mental health disorders.
- Provided more than \$1 billion to VA since 2007 to support traumatic brain injury and post-traumatic stress disorder treatment and research.
- *Created the Defense Centers of Excellence for Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury and expanded VA's polytrauma system of care to 22 network sites and clinic support teams to provide state-of-the-art treatment to injured veterans at facilities closer to their homes.*
- Expanded VA's use of electronic health records to improve the quality of medical care for veterans.

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