

Health Care Reform²⁰⁰⁹

Women & Health Care Reform

Why is health care reform a women's issue?

- Women have **more health care needs**, mainly due to pregnancy and family planning.¹
 - **Nine out of ten** women at risk of an unintended pregnancy are **using a contraceptive method**.¹
 - If a woman wants two children, she will spend about **three decades** of her life **avoiding pregnancy**.¹
- **Maternity coverage** can be **difficult to find**. One member of Congress, a male Senator, commented that he didn't want to pay for maternity coverage since he would never use it. Another Senator aptly commented: "I think your mom did."¹
- Private insurance companies have been getting away with practices such as **denying coverage** based on "pre-existing conditions" like **domestic violence**¹ and **C-sections**.
- Women are more likely to **skip necessary care** (not fill prescriptions, refrain from getting medical attention, omit needed tests) **because of cost**.¹
- More women than men are either **uninsured or underinsured** – **45%** of women in America in 2007 had inadequate or nonexistent coverage.¹
- Women have **higher rates** of significant **financial hardship** because of medical bills. Medical bills caused **one-third** of all women in 2007 to have to use up all their savings, mortgage their house, take on credit card debt, or be unable to pay for food, rent or heat.¹
- A much **greater percentage** of women's **incomes** is **eaten up** by out-of-pocket **medical costs** when compared to men's income expenditures.¹

For further information, go to www.nwlc.org and for a good article on the topic read <http://economix.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/09/28/health-care-reform-is-a-womens-issue/>

U.S. Census Bureau, Statistical Abstract of the United States: 2009; "Table 159 – Ambulatory Care Visits to Physicians' Offices and Hospital Outpatient and Emergency Departments: 2006", "Table 161 – Visits to Hospital Emergency Departments by Diagnosis: 2006," "Table 170 – Hospital Discharges and Days of Care by Selected Diagnosis: 2006," U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics, "Utilization of Ambulatory Medical Care by Women: United States, 1997-98," *Vital and Health Statistics*, Series 13, Number 149 (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Hyattsville, MD: July 2001).

¹ Mosher WD et al., Use of contraception and use of family planning services in the United States: 1982-2002, *Advance Data from Vital and Health Statistics*, No. 350, 2004.

¹ The Alan Guttmacher Institute (AGI), *Sharing Responsibility: Women, Society and Abortion Worldwide*, New York: AGI, 1999, Chart 1.1.

¹ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2n-uePbXT4Q>

¹ Women's Law Project & Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence, FYI: Insurance Discrimination Against Victims of Domestic Violence, 2002 Supplement 2 (2002), http://www.womenslawproject.org/brochures/InsuranceSup_DV2002.pdf

¹ Elizabeth Patchias and Judy Waxman, The Commonwealth Fund, *Women and Health Coverage: The Affordability Gap* (Apr. 2007),

<http://www.nwlc.org/pdf/NWLCCommonwealthHealthInsuranceIssueBrief2007.pdf>

¹ Sheila D. Rustgi, Michelle M. Doty, and Sara R. Collins, *Women at Risk: Why Many Women are Forgoing Needed Health Care* (New York: The Commonwealth Fund, May 2009)

¹ *Ibid.*

The American Medical Student Association
Health Care for All Steering Committee
1902 Association Drive, Reston, VA 20191-1502



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