Health Care Reform 2009

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), S*haring 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*.

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