



STATEMENT FOR
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
EDUCATION AND LABOR SUBCOMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EMPLOYMENT, LABOR,
AND PENSIONS

HEARING ON
EXPLORING PATHWAYS TO AFFORDABLE, UNIVERSAL COVERAGE

February 17, 2022

The Partnership for Employer-Sponsored Coverage is an advocacy alliance of employment-based organizations and trade associations representing businesses of all sizes and the over 181 million American workers and their families who rely on employer-sponsored coverage every day. We are committed to working to ensure that employer-sponsored coverage is strengthened and remains a viable, affordable option for decades to come.

Employer-sponsored coverage has been the backbone of our nation's health system for nearly eight decades. Employers of all sizes contribute vast resources to employees and their families through the employer-sponsored system. Employers have a vested interest in health care quality, value, and system viability. Employers have been on the leading edge of health delivery innovation and modeling for decades.

Benefits offerings and coverage plans in the employer-sponsored system are as diverse as employers and employees themselves. With self-insured coverage under the Employee Retirement Income Security Act (ERISA), employers tailor coverage to meet their workforce's specific needs across state lines, pay all health claims and bears the financial risk, and utilize a third-party administrator (insurance carrier) for daily plan management. Through the fully-insured state regulated insurance market, employers purchase a prescribed benefit insurance product sold in a state from an insurance carrier and do not bear the full financial risk of claims.

Employers have led the way in benefits design and innovation for decades and will continue to do so for decades to come. There is no one-size-fits-all employer health plan nor should the federal government enact or implement laws that stifle an employer's ability to develop benefits offerings that meet the needs of their specific workforce. All levels of government should work constructively with private sector employers to ensure that employers have the tools and flexibility to foster benefits design and innovations that provide employees with benefits that are crucial to the wellbeing of themselves and their families.

The foundation of the employer-sponsored coverage system is rooted in workforce policy and business operations. Employers of all sizes offer coverage for employee recruitment and

retention, and the functionality of a business is centered around a productive, thriving, and healthy workforce.

The ability to offer coverage to employees and the capacity to operate a business for its core purpose are not mutually exclusive functions. An employer offer of coverage is not merely a transaction in which an employee fills out paperwork, enrolls in coverage, and receives an insurance card – it is a multifaceted fiscal and operational commitment at the core of any business. As employers are making the decision to offer coverage and determine which type of coverage to offer their employees, a critical aspect of this deliberation is the administrative compliance costs and complexities associated with coverage.

When considering legislative and regulatory policy development and implementation, federal lawmakers and regulators must understand and appreciate the societal and economic commitments employers make to our nation's workforce through the employer-sponsored coverage system. The following policy and implementation questions should be carefully considered in the context of today's hearing and future deliberations.

- What would a single-payer health care system mean for employment? Recruitment and retention of employees?
- How would a Medicare or Medicaid buy-in program be an advantage or disadvantage to employees and employers?
- How would expansion of Medicare/Medicaid through a buy-in program effect current program beneficiaries and resources?
- How would a Medicare/Medicaid buy-in program effect timely access to providers and services for the influx of new beneficiaries?
- How would the employee-employer relationship change by a Medicare buy-in plan? Specifically with regard to working Americans between 50-64?
- What is a Medicare buy-in program striving to accomplish? Cohort of uninsured?
- How would a Medicare/Medicaid buy-in program effect take-up rates for fully-insured employer-sponsored plans? How would it effect other populations of employees?

The Partnership for Employer-Sponsored Coverage opposes the establishment of a single-payer health care system. Dismantling our nation's private sector employment-based health system which provides coverage for the largest percentage of the population would create utter chaos and massive disruptions to the care system for all Americans. We urge Congress to devote its attention and resources toward issues to improve our current health care system such as increasing market competition, providing more coverage choices and access to providers for all Americans, and addressing systematic cost drivers and wasteful spending. Our public principles include:

- Preserving the current tax treatment of employer-sponsored coverage
- Promoting innovations and diversity of plan designs and offerings for employees

- Providing employers with compliance relief from burdensome regulations
- Repealing the Affordable Care Act taxes on employer-sponsored coverage
- Protecting ERISA

As a coalition representing businesses of all sizes, the Partnership for Employer-Sponsored Coverage has the unique ability to provide operational input across the full spectrum of the employer system – from the smallest family-owned business to the largest corporation. Employers have a great stake in the development and implementation of health care policies.

We stand ready to work with the 117th Congress in a bipartisan manner strengthen and preserve our nation’s private sector employment-based health system. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss these issues with you or your staffs. If such a meeting would be of interest to you, please have your staff contact P4ESC’s Executive Director Neil Trautwein at eneiltrautwein@gmail.com.

PARTNERSHIP FOR EMPLOYER-SPONSORED COVERAGE

www.p4esc.org