

MEPS Data in Report on Middle Class and Health Reform

The Middle Class Task Force recently released a new report, *Why Middle Class Americans Need Health Reform*. The report highlights the challenges that middle class Americans face in the current health care system. By examining cost, coverage, access, and choice, this report shows how the current system has impacted the middle class.

In response to a request from the Office of Health Reform and the White House, staff from the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality's Center for Financing, Access, and Cost Trends conducted the analyses of data from the Medical Expenditure Panel Survey (MEPS) on financial burdens attributable to health care costs and on employer-sponsored coverage and offer rates.

The Middle Class Task Force is a major initiative targeted at raising the living standards of middle class, working families in America. It is comprised of top-level administration policymakers. In addition to regular meetings, it will conduct outreach sessions with representatives of labor, business, and the advocacy communities. The Task Force is chaired by Vice President Joe Biden. The Vice President and members of the Task Force work with a wide array of Federal agencies that have responsibility for key issues facing the middle class. They expedite administrative reforms, propose Executive orders, and develop legislative and policy proposals that can be of special importance to working families.

Besides the Chair, Vice President Biden, members of the Middle Class Task Force include the Secretaries of Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, Treasury, Commerce, Housing and Urban Development, Transportation, and Agriculture; the Directors of the National Economic Council, the Office of Management and Budget, and the Domestic Policy Council; and the Chair of the Council of Economic Advisors.

Goals of the Task Force are:

- Expanding education and lifelong training opportunities.
- Improving work and family balance.
- Restoring labor standards, including those for workplace safety.
- Helping to protect middle class and working family incomes.
- Protecting retirement security.

The report is available at

http://www.whitehouse.gov/assets/documents/071009_FINAL_Middle_Class_Task_Force_report2.pdf

Request for information from:	Meena Seshamani, M.D., Ph.D., Director of Policy Analysis, Office of Health Reform, Department of Health and Human Services
Response from:	James M. Branscome, M.S., Survey Statistician, and Didem Bernard, Ph.D., Health Economist
Information Requested:	June 21, 2009
Information supplied:	June 25, 2009