



*Improving patient, workplace,
and environmental health and
safety in healthcare*

Global Health and Safety Initiative

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From the Executive Director's Desk

On Health (not just Health Care) Reform

These are heady times. Both the House and Senate have released committee health care reform bills that contain historic and wide-reaching changes to the nation's health care system. Among the many significant reforms are **guaranteed coverage** - i.e. a prohibition on exclusion of coverage or termination for pre-existing conditions or health care use; **mandated coverage** - all business (exemption for small businesses) must offer health insurance or pay health insurance fees and all individuals must have health insurance (assistance provided for those with low incomes and exemptions for those unable to obtain affordable health coverage), the creation of a **government run health plan** and numerous **cost reforms**. For more on the House bill, see the [Committee on Energy and Commerce's website](#) and check out the [press release from the Senate's Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee](#).

What is different this time from previous health reform efforts is the wide-spread understanding that our health care system has enormous impacts on our individual and collective financial health as well as on the health of our population. President Obama has stated that healthcare reform is "the single most important thing we can do for America's long term fiscal health." And we see business, health insurance, the pharmaceutical industry, labor, and the health care industry all lining up in support of reform.

However, the cost of reform, who pays for it, and who loses or benefits are still very much contentious issues. For example the [U.S. Chamber of Commerce](#) in a July 15 letter to the House Ways and Means Committee stated its opposition: "In its current form, this bill would greatly

increase taxes on American businesses and families, do little to address the rising costs of health care, and restrict choice or force Americans to lose the health care coverage they have. The Chamber strongly opposes the bill's proposed tax increases. These provisions would devastate small businesses already struggling with a severe recession, would harm the competitiveness of U.S. companies, and would negatively impact global trade." And a recent poll found fifty percent of Americans oppose the House health reform bill, America's Affordable Health Choice Act, according to a University of Texas/Zogby Intl. poll on American attitudes on health care reform. Only 42% of Americans support the bill, the survey found. The poll found widespread support for providing insurance for all Americans, but not for rationing care or increasing taxes. A webcast on the findings is available at www.visualwebcaster.com/healthreform.

In their current form the House and Senate health reform bills focus largely on health care reform. Given that health care is now a \$2.5 trillion business, representing approximately 17% of the nation's gross domestic product (GDP) and one of the few areas of the economy that is still growing, this is hardly surprising. But there are also a number of encouraging signs that the health of the population and prevention are being considered as well. For example the American Public Health Association has listed a number of areas in the proposed reform legislation that promote prevention and public health including developing a national strategy, providing funding, requiring coverage and supporting research. See the [APHA website for more](#).

The Global Health and Safety Initiative with its health system and NGO partners (Health Care Without Harm, Practice Greenhealth and the Center for Health Design) is developing a No Harm Agenda. GHSI's No Harm Agenda will show that how we design, build and operate hospitals can lead to significant improvements in patient outcomes, workplace safety, and in preventing illnesses associated with environmental practices --- and save billions of dollars. The No Harm Agenda brings together evidence-based design, safety, quality, environmental sustainability and community health in a prioritized roadmap of what health care can do to contribute to a healthier society and significantly reduce overall health care costs.

The U.S.'s health care costs are not sustainable and have priced millions of Americans out of coverage. We are experiencing an epidemic in preventable chronic diseases, now representing 75% of health care costs, as environmental and unhealthy choices are adding a significant burden to the health of the population. And by numerous measures we are not receiving the safety and quality of care that we are paying for. GHSI's No Harm Agenda shows a better and smarter way to go for improved outcomes and achieving billions of dollars in savings. The No Harm Agenda will be unveiled at the invitation only GHSI Summit, September 16-17 in Washington, D.C. Contact info@globalhealthsafety.org for more information. We believe that the No Harm Agenda is part of the answer ... for true health, not just health care, reform.

Bob Eisenman, Ph.D.
Executive Director
Global Health and Safety Initiative

Upcoming Events

More information about these and other events can be found on the [Events Page](#) of our website. To tell us about an event, please contact GHSI staff at [info AT globalhealthsafety.org](mailto:info@globalhealthsafety.org).

- ▶ **Save-the-Date: GHSI Summit:** Plan to join us in Washington, DC, on September 16 and 17 for the Global Health and Safety Initiative (GHSI) Summit. We're planning an exciting event which will include a public policy focus, announcements of progress, commitments and goals by health systems, governmental organizations and others and a discussion of GHSI priorities and strategic directions. We're expecting representation from CEOs and other executives from major health systems, from the Administration and Congress and other key policy leaders. Details to follow - for now please save the date.
- ▶ **GHSI Strategic Update Calls:** On Tuesday, August 11, 10am Pacific / noon Central / 1pm Eastern, join Global Health and Safety Initiative Executive Director Dr. Robert Eisenman and other GHSI partners for a free live chat to discuss upcoming new releases. Some topics to be covered include:
 - The soon-to-be released No Harm Agenda
 - The status of the House and Senate Energy Bills
 - Other public policy update(s)
 - New and forthcoming publications

Time will be set aside to answer questions from call participants. To join the free call, dial-in to 1-712-432-0800, and enter access code 717344#, a couple of minutes before the designated start time to ensure a prompt start to the call. Please also [RSVP online](#) to ensure you receive documents that may be referenced on the call.

- ▶ **HEALTHCARE DESIGN.09:** Attend [HEALTHCARE DESIGN.09](#) from October 31 - November 3, 2009 in Orlando, Florida and immerse yourself in a solution-focused experience aimed at delivering successful outcomes for healthcare facilities now and into the future. Participate in over 60 educational sessions, 59 interactive roundtable discussions, 11 state-of-the-art facility tours, and 8 pre-conference workshops. Delve into topics that include:
 - Confronting today's financial realities
 - State-of-the-art solutions that improve safety and delivery of care
 - The latest advancements in technologies and their applications
 - The building science, management, and engineering technologies of healthcare facilities

Register before July 29 to receive early-bird discounted attendee pricing.

- ▶ **ASHE Annual Conference & Technical Exhibition:** The American Society for Healthcare Engineering's 46th Annual Conference & Technical Exhibition will be held in Anaheim, California, on August 2 through 5. This year's program provides important insights on upcoming changes in codes and standards as well as information on ways to increase productivity by adopting a number of lean principles. Faculty will address topics in emergency management and facility management. GHSI's Executive Director [Dr. Eisenman](#) will be part of a presentation on energy cap and trade. For more information see www.ashe.org/ashe/annual.
- ▶ **TEDMED 2009:** Set for October 27 through 30, the fifth in a series created by Marc

Hodosh and Richard Saul Wurman, [TEDMED](#) celebrates conversations that demonstrate the intersection and connections between all things medical and healthcare related: from personal health to public health, devices to design and Hollywood to the hospital. Together, this encompasses more than twenty percent of our GNP in America while touching everyone's life around the globe. TEDMED 2009 will be held at the Hotel del Coronado in San Diego, California.

- ▶ **APHA Annual Meeting & Exposition:** The American Public Health Association's (APHA) 137th Annual Meeting and Exposition, "Water and Public Health," is set for November 7-11, 2009, in Philadelphia, PA. [Registration is now open](#). APHA's Annual Meeting and Exposition is the oldest and largest gathering of public health professionals in the world, attracting more than 13,000 national and international physicians, administrators, nurses, educators, researchers, epidemiologists, and related health specialists. APHA's meeting program addresses current and emerging health science, policy, and practice issues in an effort to prevent disease and promote health.
- ▶ **Greenbuild 2009:** [Greenbuild](#) will be in Phoenix, Arizona, November 11-13, 2009. The world's largest conference and expo dedicated to green building, Greenbuild hosts thousands of building professionals from all over the world for three days of educational sessions, renowned speakers, green building tours, special seminars, and networking events. [Registration is open](#); register by September 7 to take advantage of early registration discounts.

What's New?

Here are a few of the latest developments from GHSI's workgroups, members, and NGO partners:

- ▶ **NonProfit Hospitals Included in House and Senate Energy Bills:** GHSI helped develop a coalition (with Health Care Without Harm, Practice Greenhealth, several health systems, NGOs and others) to seek federal funds for nonprofit hospitals to make energy efficiency and/or renewable energy improvements. Representatives of the coalition met with key legislative staff in Washington, DC and advocated for including nonprofit hospitals in the energy bills moving through Congress. Through this effort, and with the help of a legislative representative, we were successful in getting language inserted in both the House and Senate Energy Bills. The bill language for the first time clearly named non-profit hospitals as eligible for federal funds for energy improvements and increased the level of grants from \$1 million to \$2.5 million. The House energy bill, the American Clean Energy and Security Act of 2009, with our language, was passed on June 26, 2009. The Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee has recently released the language for the [American Clean Energy Leadership Act of 2009, S. 1462](#); our language is on page 281 of the bill. Thanks to the health systems and others that signed on and supported our effort and especially to government relations staff at Ascension Health and St. Joseph Health System who helped make this effort successful.
- ▶ **Unsung Heroes Work Hard to Cut Hospital-Acquired Infections:** In an article dated July 9, CNN examines the changing cultural shift in American medicine that no longer accepts hospital-acquired infections as inevitable complications. Every year, such infections sicken 1.7 million and kill 99,000 people in the United States. According to a 2009 report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, approximately one out

of every 22 patients who checks into a US hospital acquires a bacterial infections, adding more than \$28 billion to health care costs. Read the [CNN article](#).

- ▶ **Healthcare Leadership: Evidence-Based Design Resources for Healthcare Executives:** Healthcare leaders can learn more about evidence-based design through two free online webcasts, produced by The Center for Health Design and Georgia Tech. Former hospital CEO, Blair Sadler and Architecture Professor, Craig Zimring help hospital leaders understand the importance and benefits of implementing their suggested evidence-based design features and strategies. View these two short webcasts and download their associated white papers at www.healthdesign.org/hcleader.

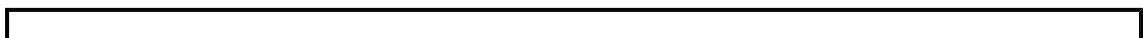
Workgroups

Interested in joining the GHSI and participating in one or more of these workgroups? Please contact GHSI staff at [info AT globalhealthsafety.org](mailto:info@globalhealthsafety.org), and we'll put you in touch with the appropriate workgroup leader to get you started.

- ▶ The focus of the **Research Collaborative** is to help provide funding and facilitate research that links better building designs, greener and safer materials and products and improved approaches to operations that will reduce the hazards associated with negative health affects.
- ▶ The **Sustainable Operations** workgroup strategy focuses on the acceleration of best practices for operations among the GHSI partners and the entire healthcare sector, including Environmental Services, Hazardous Materials, Safety, Dietary/Food Services, and Risk Management.
- ▶ The **Healthy Purchasing** workgroup will use the collective purchasing power of participating hospital systems and their Group Purchasing Organizations (GPOs) to transform the market for healthcare products and technologies that meet the goals of patient and workplace safety and environmental sustainability, including identifying priority products and developing a database of environmentally preferable product specifications.
- ▶ The **Built Environment** workgroup will provide access to an array of "best practices" to implement strategies that augment patient safety and workplace safety. These strategies also will maximize the sector's environmental performance while reducing healthcare's eco-footprint and contributing to the health and safety of patients and workers.

Have Questions?

Visit our [GHSI website](http://ghsi.org) for frequent program updates and information about upcoming meetings and events. If you have direct questions about becoming a member of GHSI, please contact GHSI Executive Director, Bob Eisenman, Ph.D., at 510-418-6197 or [beisenman AT globalhealthsafety.org](mailto:beisenman@globalhealthsafety.org).



Thank you for your help. Working together through GHSI, we can transform the health care industry and improve patient, worker, workplace and environmental safety.

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