



AMERICAN BENEFITS
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Council sets forth recommendations for Senate HELP Committee
**Uncontrolled health care costs the defining
issue for contemporary employee benefits**

WASHINGTON, DC – “Health care costs not only represent the most serious threat to employer-sponsored benefits, but to American competitiveness itself,” American Benefits Council President James Klein said upon the delivery of [written recommendations to the U.S. Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee](#) on March 1.

These recommendations include:

- **Increasing employers’ access to health data, especially their own:** most employers that have had success decreasing the rate of health care spending have started by taking deep dives into their data.
- **Identifying and using uniform quality measures:** as more large employers implement innovative payment reforms, such as direct contracting or creating accountable care organizations, a uniform set of standardized quality measures is critical.
- **Taking the “surprise” out of “surprise” billing:** policymakers should prohibit balance-billing patients for emergency services provided by an out-of-network provider, or for non-emergency treatment by an out-of-network provider at an in-network facility. Any solution, however, should not incentivize providers to reject network participation, which lowers costs for consumers.
- **Reduce incentives for provider consolidation:** provider competition benefits consumers and employer plan sponsors. The Medicare program should expand implementation of site-neutral payment reform in order to decrease incentives for consolidation of health care providers.

- **Modernize health savings accounts:** HSAs have been used to help make health coverage more affordable by encouraging consumers to use high-quality, cost effective providers.
- **Address low-value, harmful care:** Congress should encourage HHS to use existing authorities to stop paying for care that unequivocally does more harm than good.
- **Protect the favorable tax-treatment of employer-provided health benefits:** the current tax treatment of employer-sponsored health benefits is a great bargain to U.S. taxpayers. For every dollar of “foregone” tax revenue, employers spend over four dollars to provide vital health care protection to workers and their families. of health care. That is one reason the Council recommends fully and immediately repealing the 40 percent “Cadillac Tax” on employer-provided health coverage.

In conjunction with a series of hearings dating back to the previous Congress, Senate HELP Committee Chairman Lamar Alexander (R-TN) issued a call for specific recommendations to reduce the growing burden of health care costs on “taxpayers, employers and family budgets.”

As illustrated [the American Benefits Council’s recent American Benefits Legacy report](#), the uniquely American system of employee benefits has provided health and financial security with unmatched efficiency for nearly a century. But the steady growth of health care costs threatens not only employers’ ability to provide affordable, high quality coverage, it puts pressure on retirement plans and all other types of employee benefit programs.

“As representatives of large employers, and on behalf of the more than 181 million people covered by employer plans, we thank Chairman Alexander and Ranking Member Patty Murray (D-WA) for their leadership on this critically important effort,” Klein said.

For more information on health policy, or to arrange an interview with Klein or Ilyse Schuman, senior vice president, health policy, contact Jason Hammersla, Council vice president, communications, at jhammersla@abcstaff.org or by phone at 202-289-6700 (office) or (202) 422-4652 (cell).

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The Council is a public policy organization whose members include over 220 of the world’s largest corporations, as ranked by Fortune and Forbes. Collectively, the Council’s members either directly sponsor or administer health and retirement benefits for virtually all Americans covered by employer-sponsored plans.