

# Health insurance group proposes coverage reform plan

NEW YORK (AP) — The insurance industry took a big step toward shaping health-care reform Thursday by proposing a sweeping plan for universal coverage that would be financed partly by taxing Americans with generous benefits.

The Health Insurance Association of America said the draft proposal approved by its board will "jump-start health-care reform."

A cornerstone of the plan is to cut costs and provide a package of "essential" benefits to all Americans. Those are goals championed by President-elect Clinton.

Clinton spokesman George Stephanopoulos said it was a break-

through for the insurance industry trade group to "come around and say that we need a national health-care system."

The association's proposal reflects insurance-industry thinking long before Clinton's victory, as it became clearer that the nation's \$800 billion health-care system was out of control. The proposal should give insurers a more influential voice in the reform process.

Stephanopoulos said the group has a right to try to influence future legislation.

"If there is strong support across the country for national health insur-

ance with real cost containment, and that is causing the insurance industry to cooperate with us, we want to work with them."

Private insurers would agree to provide coverage to every American. People would be covered either through their employers or "their own means." The essential-benefits package would pay for catastrophic illness, as well as primary and preventive care.

Showing they are willing to compromise, insurers would accept people with pre-existing conditions. Such people typically are rejected for cov-

erage because they are considered expensive risks.

The plan also includes cost controls that would discourage excessive doctor visits, as well as unnecessary testing and hospitalizations.

Private and public studies indicate that 25 percent to 33 percent of all medical procedures and tests performed are unneeded, said Stephen Young, director of the association's New York office.

Some experts contend the United States is a leader in medical technology partly because of the tendency for

insurance companies to pay for any treatment without regard to cost.

For employed Americans who continue to receive generous benefits, anything beyond the value of the essential benefits package would be taxed as income.

"If people want the Cadillac," Young said, "then they have to pay extra."

Those tax revenues would help the government foot the bill to cover the poor. Private insurers and health providers would give people below the poverty line primary and preventive care.

## Job wanted

### Ousted Congress members vie for spots in new Clinton administration

WASHINGTON (AP) — Less than a month after losing his re-election bid, Rep. Tom Downey, D-N.Y., was already working on a new government project — helping Bill Clinton's transition team.

Rep. Dennis Eckart was a late Clinton backer, but he pitched in to help Vice President-elect Al Gore prepare for his debate. Sen. Wyche Fowler, D-Ga., on the night of his runoff defeat, said his future would include doing whatever he could to help out the new president.

This year's tumultuous national election has created a large talent pool of ex-legislators for President-elect Clinton as he begins to put together the first Democratic executive branch in 12 years.

Three Democratic senators and 30 House

Democrats lost either their primary or general election campaigns, and others retired rather than face almost certain defeat. Now, many are making it known they are available for work.

Choosing an election loser for a Cabinet post may seem like dredging, but in fact there are advantages over choosing an incumbent.

If Clinton chooses Senate Finance Committee Chairman Lloyd Bentsen for Treasury Secretary, as he apparently is considering, he might solve one problem but cause others.

The Democrats could easily lose that Texas Senate seat to the Republicans in a special election. In addition, Clinton's key economic programs would have to be sent to a new Finance Committee chairman, probably Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan, D-N.Y., who is

untested in that job.

If Sen. Bill Bradley, D-N.J., moved over to Secretary of State, as has been rumored, his seat could fall to the other party.

President Bush, whose cabinet included several former House members including HUD Secretary Jack Kemp and Labor Secretary Lynn Martin, also plucked a couple of incumbents out of their congressional posts, including Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney. But Republicans knew they could hold Cheney's Wyoming seat.

Losing re-election campaign often says little about a lawmaker's knowledge or talent. Rep. Stephen Solarz, D-N.Y., a recognized expert in foreign affairs whose name often appears on guest lists of the Clinton administration, was

sloppy with his House bank account but lost mainly because of redistricting.

Downey, chairman of a subcommittee of the powerful House Ways and Means Committee, is considered a sure bet for an administration post. Although he was a late supporter of Clinton, he is a close friend of Gore's.

For the Clinton transition, Downey heads a group that is preparing a report on the Department of Health and Human Services. He has let it be known he'd consider deputy director of the Office of Management and Budget.

Les AuCoin, D-Ore., a House colleague of Downey's who narrowly failed to unseat incumbent Republican Sen. Bob Packwood, has quietly put his name on the market too.

## Poll finds consumers more hopeful

NEW YORK (AP) — Economic optimism has begun to outpace pessimism as substantial numbers of Americans gain hope from falling interest rates and the election of a new president, according to an Associated Press poll.

The poll of 1,002 adults Friday through Tuesday found that 47 percent feel more hopeful, compared with 28 percent less hopeful, since Bill Clinton's election.

Even one in five Republicans feels more hopeful since Clinton won.

Overall, 29 percent believe the economy is improving, up from 5 percent in a comparable poll a year ago. The pessimistic share that thinks the economy is getting worse fell to 27 percent from 69 percent.

Those from high-income households were most likely to be in the 43 percent who said they feel more hopeful because of lower interest rates.

The poll was taken by ICR Survey Research Group of Media, Pa., part of

AUS Consultants. Results have a margin of sampling error of plus or minus 3 percentage points.

The number intending to spend more money on gifts this Christmas season compared with the last few years has almost doubled to 13 percent, from 7 percent in a comparable poll a year ago.

Those who plan to spend less dropped from 40 percent to 32 percent. The rest plan to spend about the same amount as in past years.

Another change this year is a much stronger tendency of women than men to expect to spend less this holiday season.

Optimism about the nation's economy is lower among women than men. While 37 percent of men believe the economy is improving, only 23 percent of women do.

A majority of men, 53 percent, said they expect to have more money in their household next year compared with this year. But only 44

percent of women have the same hope. Overall, 48 percent of Americans expect their personal finances to improve, 23 percent expect to have less money. The rest expect little change or don't know.

Economists would tell people that since personal income after inflation has been falling on average around the country, their best hope of having more money is to take advantage of lower interest rates. Lower mortgage rates, for example, spur home sales and free up money for consumers to spend on other goods, helping the whole economy.

But more than a third of those polled said the fall in interest rates has no effect on their hopefulness about the economy.

Seventeen percent said the lower rates make them less hopeful, a view especially strong among those over age 65 and in the lower-middle income category.



### Now GRANDSTAND Hiring

30 fun, smiling, happy, hip people for an exciting high volume, high energy night club.  
Immediate full and part-time openings for

- Cashiers
- Concessions
- Door Staff
- Experienced DN's
- Lighting techs
- Broadcast Production Personnel

Apply 1-5 Tues. Dec. 8 & Fri. Dec. 11 Only  
Grandstand 14th & 'O'

## Little King Corp. operating under bankruptcy rules

OMAHA (AP) — The Little King Restaurant Corp. of Omaha is operating its 18-state chain of submarine sandwich shops under the umbrella of a Chapter 11 bankruptcy filing.

The company filed for reorganization on Nov. 25 in Phoenix, where Mammoth Resources Inc., Little King's owner, is located.

Robert Cook, an attorney representing Little King, said he is confident that the company will emerge successfully from bankruptcy court proceedings.

"The company has good cash flow and a good product," he said from Phoenix. "The surviving company will be able to serve the franchises and will have controllable debt."

Sidney Wertheim of Omaha, Little King's founder, sold the company to Mammoth Resources Inc. A dispute followed involving a group of businessmen, including two former Little King executives who were fired last summer.

However, Cook said the Chapter 11 filing had nothing to do with that dispute. He said Little King received notice Nov. 23 from Douglas County Bank & Trust of Omaha that the restaurant company was in default in repaying its major operating loan, Cook said.

Dennis Boesen, bank assistant vice president, declined comment Thursday.

## HAVE YOURSELF A BLUE, BLUES CHRISTMAS!



The Alligator Records Christmas Collection



Buddy Guy & Junior Wells 'Alone & Acoustic'



The Alligator Records 20th Anniversary Collection

**Plus-Alligator Records Entire Line Is Also On Sale Now At Pickles!!!**

- Koko Taylor "Jump For Joy"
- Lonnie Brooks "Satisfaction Guaranteed"
- Charlie Musselwhite "Signature"
- Tinsley Ellis "Trouble Time"
- Katie Webster "No Foolin'!"
- Delbert McClinton "Live From Austin"



3814 Normal, 237 S. 70th, 17th & P, 56th & Hwy. 2 • Plus Four Stores in Omaha • Sale ends 12/11/92

These Releases Sale Priced

**\$10.97**  
CD

**\$6.97**  
Cassette

