

# Clinton presents health care plan to Congress

WASHINGTON (AP) — Proposing a massive makeover of the nation's health care system, President Clinton called on Congress Wednesday to guarantee every American comprehensive medical benefits "that can never be taken away."

Clinton, in a speech prepared for delivery before a nationally broadcast session of Congress, said his plan would reform "the costliest and most wasteful health care system on Earth without any new broad-based taxes."

Laying out his rationale for the biggest social initiative since the New Deal, Clinton said the current system is "too uncertain and too expensive, too bureaucratic and too wasteful. It has too much fraud and too much greed."

Pointing to his own proposal, which would require all employers to provide health insurance to their workers, the president said, "This system

will work. You don't have to take my word for it."

He said that under his plan, some Americans would be asked to pay more but that the vast majority "will pay the same or less for your health care coverage and, at the same time, get the same or better coverage than you have today."

Clinton's speech set out six principles essential for any health plan: security, simplicity, quality, affordability, choice and responsibility.

The product of eight months of work, the administration's plan is based on the premise it can extend health coverage to the 37 million uninsured and at the same time shrink the nation's \$900 billion medical bill.

Health care costs are rising at more than twice the rate of other prices and represent one-seventh of all U.S. spending.

Clinton's plan for the first time would require all employers to pay 80 percent of the average health premium for their workers. Employees

would pay the rest. Small businesses and low-income workers would get subsidies.

Giant insurance-purchasing pools called health alliances would be created in each state to negotiate with doctors, hospitals and insurers. Consumers would buy their coverage through the alliances.

The plan would vastly expand the government's power to control health costs if competition alone doesn't work. But critics question whether the controls would squeeze out quality, too.

Growth in the government's two biggest health programs, Medicare and Medicaid, would be slowed by \$238 billion over five years, though many in Congress say it's politically unrealistic to cut that deeply on care for the elderly and the poor.

In a direct challenge to lawmakers, Clinton said, "Let us pledge tonight: before this Congress adjourns next year, you will pass and I will sign a new law to create health security for every American."

## Americans divided on plan

NEW YORK (AP) — Americans overwhelmingly believe the nation's health care system is in trouble, but a new poll found them divided over whether President Clinton will be able to fix it.

Three out of four respondents said the current health system is headed for a financial crisis. And when asked to rate the most important problem facing the country today, 19 percent said health care, a larger number than named unemployment (16 percent), the economy (15 percent), or crime and violence (10 percent), according to a CBS News-New York Times poll.

Forty-two percent said the nation needs to "completely rebuild" the health care system, with another 48 percent calling for "fundamental change." The sentiment ran across party lines, with 85 percent of Republicans saying they supported change.

Four out of five people polled believe their taxes will go up to pay for the Clinton health care plan, and 61 percent said they were willing to pay more taxes for better health care. Eighty-three percent said it was "very important" that any health care reform plan cover all Americans.

Sixty-five percent said they were dissatisfied with the cost of their health care, even if they did not pay for it directly. Seventy-one percent said they were satisfied with the quality of their care.

Asked if Clinton "will be able to bring about significant health care reform," 45 percent of those surveyed said he would, and 41 percent said he wouldn't.

The telephone interview of 1,136 adults nationwide was conducted Thursday through Sunday, and had a margin or error of 3 percentage points.



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## Train accident kills 40

SARALAND, Ala. (AP) — Amtrak's cross-country Sunset Limited hurtled off a bridge into an inky bayou early Wednesday, plunging its sleeping passengers into a nightmare of fire, water and death.

Forty people were killed, some of them trapped in a submerged, silver passenger car and others in a burned engine, and 13 were missing in the deadliest wreck in Amtrak's 23-year history.

More than 150 people survived, some to help other passengers who clung to wreckage from a collapsed section of the bridge in a swamp populated by alligators, snakes and bears.

"We were asleep and the next thing you know we were in the water," said Bob Watts, a retired firefighter from Placerville, Calif. "I thought it was a dream."


All three engines and four of the eight cars on the Los Angeles-to-Miami train went off the bridge, which was about 7 feet above the water. Two of the cars were passenger cars, and one of them was completely submerged in water about 16 feet deep in Bayou Canot. Another passenger car dangled perilously from what was left of the bridge.

It wasn't immediately known what caused the wreck, which happened at about 3 a.m. on the northern outskirts of Mobile. Investigators also were trying to determine whether the 84-year-old wood-and-steel bridge collapsed before the train began crossing it, or because of the crash.

One wrecked engine erupted in flame, setting the area aglow as survivors, joined by rescuers in helicopters and local people who came to the scene in boats, tried desperately to save fellow passengers.



The train carried 189 passengers and 17 crew members, Amtrak said. The worst previous single Amtrak crash killed 16 on Jan. 4, 1987, in Maryland.



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## Curriculum

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The 18-hour plan includes course requirements in areas such as humanities, writing and social sciences, he said.

"This is the direction that higher education is taking in the country," Nicholls said. "The feeling is that we should not just be in the business of training people for entry-level jobs. We should be giving them a real education."

At UNL, the new curriculum will emphasize writing and critical thinking skills, among other things, Bergstrom said. The requirements would affect incoming UNL students in the fall 1995-96 semester.

Bergstrom said each college would make the final decisions on whether to implement the changes, but he said college officials seemed supportive of the requirement plan.

The proposed requirements include:

- a mandatory one-hour library instruction course.
- about 30 hours of integrative studies courses that will include activities focusing on students' intellectual development, such as writing and critical thinking.
- one course each of essential studies in communication, math and statistics, human behavior, culture and social organization, science and technology, historical studies, humanities, arts, race, ethnicity and gender. Social sciences would require two courses.
- a recommendation called "rounding out the university experience," which includes a set of expectations and ideas for students to take part in university activities. This would not be a requirement for graduation.

At first glance, Bergstrom said, the requirements look as if they'd be a huge load for students to bear.

Actually, he said, the courses overlap — especially ones in the integrated and essential studies categories.

And, Bergstrom said, individual colleges can tailor the requirements to fit specific needs.

This isn't the first time UNL officials have proposed a general education curriculum change, he said.

In 1987, officials compiled a new curriculum plan followed by a report. But a full-scale program never emerged from the report, he said, probably because the plan would have been too costly to implement.

Bergstrom said his program would be less expensive.

"We have attempted to create a program which does need financial resources but does not demand huge new resources," he said.

Money for general education already has been earmarked in the state biennial budget. Bergstrom said he did not yet know how much the plan would cost.

As this plan is worked out, he said, the coherence in the requirements will make transferring from college to college within the university easier.

And, Bergstrom said, the plan would benefit students.

"Students, in general, will leave here with a more well-rounded, full university experience than some of them are getting now," he said. "It prepares them to be students or learners for their whole life."

That's not to say students graduating from UNL now are being cheated, Bergstrom said.

"We're not turning out students that are incompetent or lost souls in the world," he said. "We're trying to establish more unified, high-quality education."

## Daily Nebraskan

Editor	Jeremy Fitzpatrick 472-1766	Advertising Manager	Jay Cruise
Managing Editor	Wendy Mott	Senior Acct. Exec.	Bruce Kroese
Assoc. News Editors	Angie Brunkow Kara Morrison	Publications Board Chairman	Doug Fiedler 436-6407
Editorial Page Editor	Kathy Steinauer	Professional Adviser	Don Walton 473-7301

FAX NUMBER 472-1761

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