

# NHA/WASHINGTON

update\*

## Taking Responsibility

*Healthcare reform shakeout makes health freedom more important than ever.*

Do you really understand the new Patient Protection and Affordable Healthcare Act? As if the issues surrounding health insurance weren't confusing enough, this bill, more than 2,500 pages long, may multiply uncertainties as everyone adapts to the changes it will bring.

In the furor that occurred before the bill's passage, those people who argued most passionately on both sides appeared to have emotions in common when it came to healthcare—stress, anxiety, anger, fear. Many Americans seem to see sickness as our destiny, just as we've been taught by a model of medicine that treats symptoms and not causes. As reform took shape, we seemed to again forget that there's another option: Staying healthy so you can avoid the doctor's office, insurance snafus and co-pays altogether.

Imagine if the energy that was poured into healthcare reform went towards stopping disease in the first place. RAND Corporation researchers estimate that up to \$162 billion could be saved each year by adopting prevention and personal health-management programs. As motivating as financial benefits may be, there are far greater rewards for those who undertake proactive preventive health initiatives—starting with peace of mind.

### Security in Wellness

Amidst the raging chaos of healthcare reform debates, one demographic remained unconcerned:

Those who are healthy. There is a confidence in people who care for their bodies, exercise regularly, eat healthy and take nutritional supplements. This segment of our society may represent a healthcare solution that eclipses healthcare reform. By



taking steps to maintain their health, these people may minimize their need for expensive doctor's visits. By taking personal health responsibility, they defy sickness as an inevitability, and instead claim wellness as a birthright.

Health freedom enables us all to follow this course if we want to. But how will the new health reform bill impact our right to pursue health as we choose?

### Health Socialism?

One disturbing aspect of the new health bill is that instead of encouraging people to proactively maintain wellness, it will force all Americans to purchase government-mandated health insurance, a rule that takes

effect in 2014. Those who refuse to purchase health insurance will face heavy fines.

Health insurance is great, but forcing Americans to buy insurance plans of our government's choosing is a violation of health freedom. We must always protect our right to choose our path to health, even if that means choosing to forego health insurance. If that freedom to choose is revoked, it could open a Pandora's box of health tyranny—losing the right to take nutritional supplements could be next.

With a safety net of "health insurance for all," the bill may encourage sickness and unhealthy practices. Instead of demanding personal responsibility for wellness, the bill appears to enable unhealthy people to continue down their downward spiral of smoking, obesity, poor nutrition and sedentary lifestyles. After all, if they get sick they will be "covered." Healthy, prevention-minded people, meanwhile, will pick up part of the medical bill.

The new landscape of healthcare in America remains a mystery—only time will tell its outcome. But instead of waiting, many are using this time of uncertainty as an opportunity to take control of their health and exemplify health freedom. Now is the time to seize your health destiny, embrace healthy lifestyle choices and nutritional supplements, and change our nation's health focus from sickness to wellness. For more information on how to realize this healthy future, visit [www.nha2010.com](http://www.nha2010.com). ♦

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