

Health Care Reform Still News During August Recess/White House Schedules Conference Call for Physicians Tomorrow

President Obama and Congressional leaders continue to debate the key issues in national health care reform during the August Congressional recess. The President maintains a preference for a public plan option, but says he is open to other ways to achieve the goals of choice and competition. The Senate seems to be leaning towards the insurance co-op concept advocated by Senator Kent Conrad (D-ND), one of the Senate Finance Committee's "Gang of Six" still striving for a bipartisan compromise. Maine's Senior Senator Olympia J. Snowe (R) also is a member of the "Gang of Six." As it looks less likely that Republicans will endorse any health care reform bill, Senate Democrats are talking about using the budget reconciliation process to pass a reform bill by a simple majority. The President's wavering on the public plan option has caused a negative reaction among more liberal members of Congress. On August 20, 2009, leaders of the Congressional Progressive Caucus (CPC) stated that at least 60 House members would not support any health care reform bill without a strong public option.

Against this backdrop, the AMA has advised us today that the White House has scheduled a conference call for physicians on health insurance reform for tomorrow, Tuesday, August 25, 2009 at 8:30 p.m. EDT using the following number: 800-230-1096. Physicians are asked to email questions in advance to public@who.eop.gov.