



House Passes Health Care Reform Legislation

On November 7, 2009, the House passed the Affordable Health Care for America Act (H.R. 3962). Congressional leaders now turn their attention to the health care reform proposals being considered in the Senate.

Background

By a narrow vote of 220 to 215, the House passed its version of health care reform late on November 7. The focus of the health care debate now shifts to the Senate.

What is Next?

Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV) is working to combine two very different proposals from the Senate Finance Committee (SFC) and the Health Education, Labor and Pension (HELP) Committee into a single Senate bill. (See our [September 21, 2009](#) and [October 19, 2009](#) For Your Information releases.) The provisions of the merged bill are being kept under wraps while the Congressional Budget Office estimates their costs. Once a bill is introduced, Senate debate is expected to extend into December. If the Senate passes a bill, a conference committee will have to reconcile any differences between the House and Senate versions before health reform legislation could reach President Obama's desk. Any reconciliation process would likely not occur until after the start of the new year.

We have revised our high level side-by-side [comparison](#) of the House and Senate proposals to reflect the final House legislation. This comparison will continue to be updated as legislation moves through Congress and updates can be accessed through this same link.

Buck has also prepared an annotated [flow chart](#) which compares the employer mandate requirements in the House, SFC, and HELP committee proposals.

Conclusion

Now that the House bill has been passed, plan sponsors can determine the general impact the bill would have on their programs and employees. Buck's consultants are available to model the impact of the legislation on specific programs and to answer any questions you have on the proposals now working their way through Congress.

This FYI is intended to provide general information. It does not offer legal advice or purport to treat all the issues surrounding any one topic.