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## provides health coverage Nixon Comprehensive Health Insurance Plan

Posted by Jack Linthicum - 2009/09/08 22:43

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Ted Kennedy says now he wishes he had supported Richard Nixon's CHIP health care plan in 1974. Given that Nixon was in deep political trouble it is unlikely that a bi-partisan effort would have existed, let alone succeed, what-if conditions allowed the Nixon program to be adopted? Radio speech May 20, 1974 Good afternoon: This week, the Senate Finance Committee will begin hearings on health insurance legislation that could usher in a historic reform of the American health care system. I am gratified to see that serious action on this most vital matter is going forward on both sides of the Capitol, and I am confident that the executive and legislative branches of the Government, in a spirit of statesmanship and compromise, can work together to resolve the problems of providing health insurance legislation which meets the needs of all Americans. While Americans today enjoy the finest health care and medical technology in our history, the cost of that care is constantly increasing. Our present system of health care insurance does not meet the costs of providing adequate care. It must be improved. Twenty-five million Americans have no health care insurance at all, and millions of others have inadequate protection. Less than half of those under 65 years of age have protection against catastrophic health costs, and almost no one over 65 has such protection. Preventive services, mental health care, outpatient services, and medication are often excluded from coverage. Many other essential services are not adequately covered. And finally, to further burden our already inadequate health insurance system, wage-price controls have expired, and there is no brake on further increases in health costs. The failure of the Congress to adopt my legislative request to continue authority for mandatory cost controls for the health industry has left the country unprotected against the very real possibility of an unbridled increase in those costs. A few facts and figures will give you an idea of the scope of the problem. In the past 2 3/4 years, the overall cost of health care has risen by more than 20 percent. The national average cost for a day of hospital care now exceeds \$ 110. It costs an average of close to \$1,000 to cover delivery of a baby and postnatal care. The average cost of health care for terminal cancer now exceeds \$20,000 per person. And now, in the absence of controls, the country faces a possible annual increase of 22 percent in physicians' fees alone. To emphasize the Government's concern over skyrocketing health costs, Secretary Weinberger, of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, met with representatives of 20 of the Nation's major health provider groups on May 3. He urged them to take every action at their disposal to prevent the rapid escalation of costs and indicated that if cost increases were not voluntarily controlled, it could lead to drastic, congressionally imposed, mandatory controls. I strongly share Secretary Weinberger's concern on this matter, and I urge the health industry to do everything it can voluntarily to keep the brake on rising health care costs. But voluntary restraints will not be enough. We must have legislation to insure that every American has financial access to high quality health care. Nineteen seventy-four can and should be the year in which we move decisively to protect every American against the rising and often prohibitive costs of health care. Nineteen seventy-four can and should be the year in which we create new incentives to make the health care system of the United States even better and more efficient than it is. And 1974 can and should be the year in which firm, fair steps are taken to hold down the rate of inflation that has continually driven the cost of medical care higher and higher during the past 20 years. Never has the need been greater, or the national climate more favorable, for the development of a sound consensus on a comprehensive program of health insurance than that need is today. In order to best serve the American people, such a program must include three basic principles:

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