



## HEALTH CARE

---

Since the enactment of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, better known as Obamacare, many of the promises made to the American people by the law's authors have been broken, and it continues to collapse.

Americans were promised that they could keep the doctor and health care plan they liked and that their health insurance premiums would go down. The reality is that millions of people lost the coverage they had and liked, while others discovered they could no longer see the doctor of their choice. Today, premiums on the exchanges are soaring, insurance markets are struggling to stay afloat, and patients' choices are dwindling. We can and must do better.

I am committed to advancing common-sense, patient-centered health care solutions. We need to focus on solutions that will help make health care more affordable for all Americans. Rather than expand the government's role in providing health care, I support proposals that would make the private insurance market more competitive and ensure individuals and families have choices when it comes to their health care needs.

### **Pre-existing Conditions**

I support finding affordable options for the uninsured or those who are priced out of the insurance market. I support expanding and reforming high-risk pools to help all Americans access affordable health care, regardless of pre-existing conditions.

### **Small Business Health Plans**

I hear from many small business owners in South Dakota who want to provide quality health care coverage for their employees, but often cannot afford the high cost of premiums. South Dakota has more than 83,000 small businesses and many South Dakotans who are uninsured work for small businesses. I support allowing individuals and small businesses to band together to purchase more affordable health insurance for their employees.

### **Reform Medical Liability Laws**

I support reforming medical liability laws so doctors can focus on what is best for their patients rather than practicing defensive medicine as a way to protect themselves from frivolous lawsuits. Comprehensive medical liability reform is an important way to can lower the cost of health care for all South Dakota families.

### **Reform Health Insurance Regulations**

I am in favor of reforming health insurance regulations and finding ways to make the insurance market more competitive. This would provide consumers in South Dakota with a greater number of options in insurance plans and put downward pressure on health insurance prices. Additionally, I support providing state incentives to pursue state-based reforms to their insurance markets.

### **Waste, Fraud, and Abuse in Current Health Care Programs**

It is imperative that we address the waste, fraud, and abuse currently plaguing the Medicare and Medicaid systems. Combatting fraud in these programs is critical to ensuring they remain sustainable for those who rely on them. According to the Government Accountability Office, in fiscal year 2015, Medicare alone suffered nearly \$60 billion in losses due to fraud – an unnecessary cost that was sustained by hard-working taxpayers.

### **Enhance Health Savings Accounts (HSAs)**

I believe Congress should create incentives to encourage people to save for current and future health care needs by allowing participants to use HSA funds to pay premiums for high-deductible health insurance. HSAs are proven to encourage more cost-conscious spending.

### **Telehealth and Digital Medicine**

As a member of the Senate Rural Health Caucus, I support initiatives to strengthen our rural health care infrastructure. Telehealth is innovative technology that provides real-time information to a health provider from a patient hundreds of miles away using video-conferencing and other technologies. This technology could help home health agencies provide home-monitoring equipment to improve patient care and allow seniors more flexibility to remain at home rather than other more expensive care options.

Using other digital medicine tools, like electronic health records and individual health applications on smart phones, also helps reduce unnecessary duplication of tests and procedures and gives individuals more responsibility over their health care.

### **Focus on Wellness and Prevention**

We must change our health care focus to include wellness and prevention. Helping people lead healthier lives is a critical part of controlling the cost of health care for everyone. I support reforms, like my Personal Health Investment Today Act, for example, that would make it easier for employers, insurers, and patients to take action to control the chronic disease and obesity epidemic in our country through incentives that encourage healthier behavior and participation in wellness programs.

## **Spotlight**

[Standing With Veterans to Protect the Hot Springs VA](#)

[Seeking Accountability for South Dakota's Veterans](#)

[Helping Address Needs in Indian Country](#)

[Bending the Health Care Cost Curve Down](#)

[Addressing the Suicide Crisis in Indian Country](#)

## Press

### February 2018

---

2/9/18 [Thune, Carper Introduce Legislation to Add Certainty to Chronic Care Coverage in HSA-Eligible, High-Deductible Health Plans](#)

### November 2017

---

11/2/17 [Thune, Senate Health IT Working Group Members Reintroduce Legislation to Improve Meaningful Use Program](#)

### October 2017

---

10/26/17 [Thune Statement on President Trump's Opioid Public Health Emergency Declaration](#)

### September 2017

---

9/27/17 [Thune-Supported Provisions to Address Chronic Illness Included in Senate-Passed Bill](#)

### June 2017

---

6/22/17 [Thune Statement on the Senate Health Care Discussion Draft](#)

6/7/17 [Thune: Obamacare's Premium Increases Are Not Sustainable for South Dakotans](#)

6/2/17 [The Indian Health Service Must Be Held Accountable](#)

### May 2017

- 
- 5/25/17 Thune Introduces Bill to Increase Accountability and Transparency at the Indian Health Service
- 
- 5/4/17 Thune: House Bill Critical Step for Delivering Relief from Obamacare
- 
- 5/3/17 Thune Joins Colleagues in Introducing Bipartisan Legislation to Expand Telehealth Services, Improve Health Outcomes, and Reduce Costs