

HEALTH CARE EXCESSES ISSUE

ACTION PLAN:

BACKGROUND

The antis often claim the "health costs of smoking" justify tobacco restrictions, bans and tax increases. These groups -- which are often composed of coalitions of doctors and others in the health care industry -- are involved in anti-smoking activities for reasons beyond simply wanting to push a social agenda. Often they are involved in the political process to ensure their own job security -- to secure government (taxpayer) funding for their projects -- or to make sure their own services are financed by cigarette taxes dedicated to pay health care costs.

Additionally, recent events suggest that we can expect to see increasing hostile activity by the health care coalition. In mid-September, a New Jersey coalition proposed a \$1 per pack increase to pay for indigent medical care. Less than two weeks later, in Washington state, a similar proposal was announced at the annual meeting of the Washington State Medical Association. It is quite probable that the \$1 increase proposals are part of an organized effort.

And on the national scene where health care is a presidential campaign issue, some observers suggest that a *Clinton* Administration would introduce a national health care package -- possibly financed in part by higher cigarette taxes -- in its first 100 days, or at least first 3-6 months of taking office.

PLAN OBJECTIVES

Move public opinion in the right direction on this issue. How will we know if we're meeting this objective? Answer: when we start winning those tax and restriction fights in which the anti's have used the health-care cost argument as a centerpiece of their campaigns.

STRATEGIES/ACTION PLAN

1. Produce comprehensive research piece on health care excesses issue.
 - o First draft completed and previously reviewed by recipients of this memo. (We've been using some of the research for N.J. and Washington state fights, for Letters to Editor program and "Media Watch" newsletter to media-trained smokers' rights leaders.)
 - o Final version will be completed Wednesday, Oct. 14.

2. Get research piece into hands of friendly members of Congress. Consider same for key state legislators.

- o Reviewed first draft research report with Burleigh Leonard on Sept. 3.
- o Meet with Burleigh and give final piece, Week of Oct. 19
- o Meet with Roger Mazingo, review research and plans, Week of Oct. 19
- o Propose that Burleigh work with friendly legislator in signing and placing major Op-ed piece in Wall Street Journal, or other major publications.

3. Seek placement of comprehensive story on Health Care Excesses in major general media: Readers' Digest, Wall Street Journal, USA Today, New York Times, Washington Post.

- o Consider working with Powell/Tate, or other outside counsel. If appropriate, would meet and review research piece, explore how we might get major media interested in story.

story is not new. look for angle.

4. Place story in Beltway journals, other, typically conservative, thought-leader publications: National Review, Human Events, American Spectator, Public Interest. With possible election of Democrats to W.H., seek placements, possibly with different angles, in liberal elitist publications...New Republic might go for "doctor bashing" angle.

- o Story placement topics:
 - "Health Care Reform -- Clinton's Most Pressing Issue"
 - "Why Doctors Should Worry About Clinton"
 - "No More Money For Health Care Until We Fix The Problem"
 - "Sick People Aren't Bankrupting America -- A Sick Health Industry Is"
- o Tim Hyde to work with Grover Norquist for possible by-line piece

5. After comprehensive pieces have run, crank out letters to editor program, and begin major Op-ed effort citing articles on subject. Have copies made of major pieces, as well as Op-ed pieces, and have smokers mail these to their elected reps.

6. Consider possible third-party coalition work:

- o Consider creation of an EBH-type coalition in Washington. At a minimum, explore existing organizations we might join/influence. Purpose: Credible, non-tobacco voice for hearings and for generating information on issue to media, op-eds, letters, etc.
- o Begin researching likely coalition partners. Examples: insurance companies, Americans for Tax Reform, Citizens Against Government Waste.

*Study Richards
Study Original plan*

Citizens for Tax Justice

*Washington Legal Found.
Kind of thing?*

7. Create half-hour training component on issue to be part of all training functions -- possible through Public Affairs issue training efforts.
8. Create a low-cost, but information-packed health-care issues kit for use in all upcoming fights at state and local level. Would include sample news releases, news conference format, talking points, Op-eds, letters to editor, etc.

) MIS
topic

) yes

###