

## S 1679

Affordable Health Choices Act

**Congress:** 111 (2009–2011, Ended)

**Chamber:** Senate

**Policy Area:** Health

**Introduced:** Sep 17, 2009

**Current Status:** Placed on Senate Legislative Calendar under General Orders. Calendar No. 161.

**Latest Action:** Placed on Senate Legislative Calendar under General Orders. Calendar No. 161. (Sep 17, 2009)

**Official Text:** <https://www.congress.gov/bill/111th-congress/senate-bill/1679>

### Sponsor

**Name:** Sen. Harkin, Tom [D-IA]

**Party:** Democratic • **State:** IA • **Chamber:** Senate

### Cosponsors

No cosponsors are listed for this bill.

### Committee Activity

Committee	Chamber	Activity	Date
Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee	Senate	Reported Original Measure	Sep 17, 2009

### Subjects & Policy Tags

**Policy Area:**

Health

### Related Bills

No related bills are listed.

Affordable Health Choices Act - Amends the Public Health Service Act to set forth provisions governing health insurance plans and issuers, including to: (1) prohibit preexisting condition exclusions; (2) limit premium variances; (3) provide for guaranteed coverage of every employer and individual and automatic renewal of coverage; (4) limit cost-sharing for preventive care; (5) require coverage of a dependent child until 26 years of age; (6) prohibit lifetime or annual limits on benefits; and (7) prohibit group health plans from establishing eligibility rules based on salary of the employee.

Provides for grandfathered health insurance coverage.

Requires the Secretary of Health and Human Services to: (1) award grants to states for the establishment of American Health Benefit Gateways to facilitate the purchase of health insurance coverage and related insurance products; (2) establish essential health care benefits for qualified health plans available through the Gateway, which must include hospitalization, prescription drugs, and preventive and wellness services; (3) establish a community health insurance option to offer health care coverage through each Gateway; (4) establish at least two tiers of cost-sharing for eligible low-income individuals; (5) pay a premium credit to the Gateway for enrolled eligible individuals; and (6) make a payment to qualified small employers for health insurance costs of its employees.

Authorizes states to establish a Gateway or request the Secretary operate a Gateway in the state.

Amends the Internal Revenue Code to impose a surtax on each individual that does not have qualifying health insurance coverage.

Requires employers to make payments to the Secretary for each employee who is not offered qualifying coverage by such employer or for whom the employer is not contributing at least 60% of the monthly premiums for such coverage. Exempts small employers.

Community Living Assistance Services and Supports Act or the CLASS Act - Establishes a national, voluntary disability insurance program to purchase community living assistance services and supports (CLASS program) under which: (1) all employees are automatically enrolled, but are allowed to waive enrollment; (2) payroll deductions pay monthly premiums; and (3) benefits are provided, based on the level of disability, to purchase nonmedical services and supports that the beneficiary needs to maintain independence.

Sets forth provisions related to health care quality, including provisions: (1) providing grants for developing health care quality measures; (2) establishing the Patient Safety Research Center; (3) providing grants for medication management; (4) providing for emergency care research; (5) reducing hospital readmissions; (6) establishing the Center for Health Outcomes Research and Evaluation; and (7) establishing Offices of Women's Health within the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and its agencies.

Sets forth provisions governing health promotion and disease prevention, including provisions providing for: (1) school-based health clinics; (2) standards to make medical diagnostic equipment accessible to, and usable by, individuals with disabilities; (3) nutrition labeling of standard menu items offered for sale in chain restaurants and vending machines; and (4) data collection by federal health care programs.

Requires the Secretary to establish the Interagency Pain Research Coordinating Committee and the Coordinated Environmental Public Health Network.

Sets forth provisions governing the health care workforce, including provisions to: (1) provide for the establishment of the National Health Care Workforce Commission and the National Center for Health Workforce Analysis; and (2) provide grants for health care provider training. Revises provisions related to health care provider scholarship and loan repayment programs.

Sets forth provisions governing health care fraud and abuse, including provisions: (1) providing for a review of federal health care programs and private health insurance to eliminate fraud, waste, and abuse; and (2) establishing the Health Care Program Integrity Coordinating Council.

Revises provisions related to: (1) Multiple Employer Welfare Arrangement (MEWA) Plans; and (2) the 340B drug discount program (a program limiting the cost of covered drugs to certain federal grantees).

Biologics Price Competition and Innovation Act of 2009 - Amends the Public Health Service Act to allow a person to submit an application for licensure of a biological product based on its similarity to a licensed biological product (the reference product).

## **Actions Timeline**

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- **Sep 17, 2009:** Introduced in Senate
- **Sep 17, 2009:** Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions. Original measure reported to Senate by Senator Harkin. Without written report.
- **Sep 17, 2009:** Placed on Senate Legislative Calendar under General Orders. Calendar No. 161.