

Stimulus plan would provide healthcare coverage for the unemployed.

On the front page of its Health section, the [Washington Post](#) (2/3, HE1, Fairhall, Steadman) reports that a growing number of young and older Americans "who once had jobs and insurance...now seek treatment with neither." Increasingly, non-profit clinics "are seeing more people who used to be solidly middle-class. Victims of the deepening recession, they're now wondering where to turn for help." Notably, this group of people, who are "neither rich nor poor," do not "readily qualify for public programs such as Medicaid." And often, they "can't afford to buy insurance or pay hospital, doctor, and drug bills." But, the "Democrats' economic stimulus package would significantly enhance options for the unemployed and their families through insurance subsidies and a possible expansion of Medicaid, a package that some experts say would ease the financial dilemma."

The stimulus package would allow the costs for COBRA to be reduced "by about two-thirds for a year," the [AP](#) (2/3, Woodward) adds. Furthermore, "people who lose a job they've had for 10 years could stay on COBRA at their expense all the way to age 65, when Medicare takes over, if they don't get another job with insurance first." Notably, "people 55 and over could do the same without meeting the 10-year requirement." For those "who lose jobs at businesses that employ fewer than 20 people," and therefore "don't qualify for COBRA," the stimulus plan would provide healthcare coverage under Medicaid. "The feds would pay for this, plus give states much more money to run cost-shared part of the program."