

**Third Writing Assignment  
Freshman Honors Seminar  
(Due: Tuesday, April 22, 2008)**

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Spring 2008**

In 1994, the Clinton health care reform program died a slow painful death and there has been little effort on this issue at the national level since. However, for a variety of reasons, health care reform is now back front and center as a legislative issue. Massachusetts has adopted a major health care reform initiative and the Governor of California has proposed one as well. Likewise, all major presidential candidates have outlined detailed health care reform programs.

A family friend has arranged for you to intern for a network news program. You think the internship will 'look good' on your resume so you take the internship. You quickly learn that sitting through class is infinitely more interesting than making copies and running to Starbucks to get half-caf lattes but I digress.

A reporter for the program has been asked to moderate a 'town hall' forum on health care reform at a distinguished private university. The reporter has not followed the health care issue closely and needs to get up to speed quickly. Your assignment is to write a 5-7 page, double spaced, 12 point font memo with 1 inch margins outlining the key aspects and likely consequences of a particular health care reform program. You selected your assignment from a hat sometime ago and it was either proposals from Clinton, Obama, McCain or the Massachusetts reform. The assignments are at the end of this handout.

Your paper should address the following issues. First, outline the *key* characteristics of the reform proposal. You cannot discuss all aspects of the reform so make some decisions about what is important. Second, discuss the likely consequences of the reform in four key areas:

- Will the proposal increase insurance coverage?
- Will it control health care costs?
- Does the proposal deal with the fiscal concerns associated with the Medicare program?
- Does the proposal reduce tax inequality associated with employer provided health insurance?

For those looking at the Massachusetts program, you will discuss what *has* happened and not what *will* happen.

You may have to read some academic literature to answer these questions. For example, some of the proposals rely heavily on preventive medicine as a way to control costs so you will have to read up on whether this will save money.

A great service is Public Med (<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/sites/entrez>) which is an index of all articles written in medical journals. A great source of easily accessible articles in this literature is the journal *Health Affairs* which is available electronically via the library. Finally, a great source of data is the Kaiser Family Foundation ([www.kff.org](http://www.kff.org)). A number of health policy scholars have written reviews of these proposals so you may want to search for them as well.

For those looking at the Clinton plan, you may want to read up on the Massachusetts reform proposal since her proposal is loosely based on that plan.

Please document all sources. You can discuss the proposals with others in the class but you must write the text yourself. Please document all sources. Write in complete sentences.

The paper is due in hard copy at the start of class, Tuesday, April 22.

Any finally, no, you cannot trade your assignment with another student in class.

Student	Assignment
Tim B	McCain
Alyssa	Obama
Nathan	Clinton
Jessica	Clinton
Bill	Massachusetts
John	Massachusetts
Mike G	McCain
Derry	McCain
Sophia	Clinton
Christina	Massachusetts
Sam K	Obama
Brigid	McCain
Mike R	Obama
Brooks	Clinton
Sam W	Massachusetts
Tim Z	Obama