



## THE OBAMA-BIDEN PLAN TO COMBAT CANCER

Nearly 1.5 million Americans are expected to be diagnosed with cancer this year, joining over 10 million Americans who have experienced cancer in their lifetime.<sup>1</sup> Fighting cancer cost families and businesses \$78 billion in medical costs last year, and the overall cost of cancer to our economy was estimated to be over \$200 billion.<sup>2</sup> Barack Obama understands firsthand the toll cancer takes on families – his mother died from ovarian cancer in her early 50s and his grandfather battled prostate cancer. Barack Obama has spent his career fighting to improve prevention and treatment of cancer. As an Illinois State Senator, Obama passed laws to mandate insurance coverage of colorectal cancer examinations, ensure Medicaid coverage for treatment of breast and cervical cancers, promote early detection of prostate and testicular cancers, and helped create the Illinois Task Force on Cervical Cancer Elimination. As United States Senator, he has fought for increased funding for cancer research, and championed genomics and personalized medicine to identify new and better treatments for cancer and other diseases. As president, Barack Obama will build upon his career-long efforts and launch a new campaign to combat cancer and provide greater lifetime support to cancer survivors and their families.

**Double Funding for Cancer Research:** The National Institutes of Health (NIH), National Cancer Institute (NCI) and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have made significant advances in understanding cancer biology, and translating that knowledge into effective prevention programs, diagnostics, treatments and cures. Notably, this knowledge has also benefited individuals with other diseases, such as autoimmune disorders. Despite these advances, cancer funding has stagnated in recent federal budgets.<sup>3</sup> Barack Obama and Joe Biden are committed to reversing this trend, and providing our nation's scientists with the resources they need to expand and accelerate bench-to-bedside research that will lead to enhanced prevention and diagnostic tools and innovative treatments. The Obama-Biden plan will double federal funding for cancer research within 5 years, focusing on NIH and NCI. Obama and Biden will also work with Congress to increase funding for the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), an under-resourced agency that plays a critical role in ensuring that advances in cancer research make a difference in the care of the millions of Americans who experience cancer. And, their plan will provide additional funding for research on rare cancers and those without effective treatment options; for the study of health disparities and evaluation of possible interventions; and efforts to better understand genetic factors that can impact cancer onset and outcomes.

**Ensure All Americans Have Affordable, Accessible and Quality Health Care:** Individuals who lack health insurance or are underinsured receive fewer preventive cancer screenings, have a greater likelihood of being diagnosed with late stages of cancer, and experience poorer health outcomes than cancer patients who have adequate insurance.<sup>4</sup> The Obama-Biden administration will ensure affordable health coverage for all Americans. His plan maintains patient choice, and establishes a National Health Insurance Exchange with a range of private insurance options as well as a new public health plan to allow individuals and small businesses to buy affordable and accessible health coverage similar to that available to federal employees. The Obama-Biden health plan will provide tax credits to people so they can afford health care and will reduce the typical family's medical expenditures by \$2,500 per year while providing them with more health care options and greater security.

**Ensure All Americans Have Access to Preventive Health Care:** The Obama-Biden health plan will ensure that all Americans have access to preventive health care services. Their proposal creates a voluntary national pool, the National Health Insurance Exchange, comprised of a range of private plans and a new public plan.

These plans as well as all federally supported health plans, including Medicare, Medicaid and SCHIP, will be required to cover all essential clinical preventive services with minimal or zero co-pays and deductibles. Under the Obama-Biden plan, Medicaid co-pays for colorectal and breast cancer screenings will be eliminated, and colorectal cancer screenings will be required in all group and individual health plans, for example. Obama and Biden will also strengthen partnerships between federal, state and local public health authorities to expand access to proven community-based prevention programs, extend prevention efforts into workplaces and schools, and support federal initiatives, including the National Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program (NBCCEDP) that serves as a safety net for millions of women who would otherwise have no access to these screenings. Finally, the Obama-Biden public health plan will expand investment in proven smoking cessation programs and public education campaigns to raise awareness about tobacco-related cancer

**End Insurance Discrimination:** When cancer patients and cancer survivors change health insurance plans, their new insurance companies currently have the ability to deny them insurance benefits because of their “pre-existing” condition. The Obama-Biden plan will end insurance company discrimination and guarantee that all Americans – regardless of pre-existing conditions like cancer – will be able to purchase any private insurance plan at an affordable and fair price. Barack Obama and Joe Biden are also proud of their longtime support of the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act, a measure recently signed into law that will prevent insurance companies from using information from genetic tests to restrict or deny coverage to individuals at risk from cancer and other diseases.

**Improve Access to Clinical Trials:** Today, less than five percent of patients with cancer participate in clinical trials,<sup>5</sup> despite their importance in advancing cancer research and development of effective new treatments. There are multiple reasons for low participation, including poor reimbursement for clinical research and a growing shortage of clinical researchers. Barack Obama and Joe Biden will seek to increase participation in clinical trials to 10 percent of adult cancer patients by requiring coverage of patient clinical trial costs in the new public and private plans offered through the National Health Insurance Exchange, increasing NCI reimbursement for patient participation in clinical research and requesting the NCI Director to identify regulatory barriers that prevent the timely implementation and completion of successful clinical trials. Obama and Biden will also enforce President Clinton’s 2000 Executive Memorandum that expanded Medicare coverage to routine clinical trial costs, and reverse any successful attempts from the Bush Administration to change this important safeguard for Medicare beneficiaries.

**Support Evidence-Based Quality Improvement Interventions:** The Obama-Biden health plan will improve cancer outcomes by rewarding providers for achieving performance thresholds on outcome measures. Their plan will require hospitals and providers to collect and publicly report measures of health care costs and quality, including data on preventable medical errors, nurse staffing ratios, and hospital-acquired infections, so individuals are able to compare providers. The Obama-Biden health care reform plan will also implement and fund patient-centered programs, including patient navigator and medical home initiatives that help individuals access and pursue comprehensive cancer treatment.

**Improve Federal Coordination of Cancer Research, Treatment and Awareness Programs:** The Obama-Biden plan will maximize federal cancer funding by improving coordination both within the government and across government/private/non-profit partnerships for research, treatment and awareness efforts. Currently, several federal agencies are focused on different aspects of tackling cancer – NCI focuses on research, CDC on cancer control, FDA on regulating cancer-related drugs, and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) on paying for cancer-related care. Too often, efforts across these agencies are poorly coordinated, leading to gaps in our national strategy to combat cancer. As president, Barack Obama will immediately direct his Secretary of Health and Human Services, in collaboration with agency officials, academic researchers, cancer survivors and advocates for people with cancer, and state public health officials, to comprehensively examine the various cancer-related efforts of federal agencies, and provide recommendations to eliminate barriers to effective coordination across federal agencies and between the federal government and other stakeholders.

**Strengthen the Medical Workforce:** The growing demand for cancer specialists is expected to far outpace the number of practicing oncologists in our health care system.<sup>6</sup> At the same time, the nation's demand for primary care physicians, nurses and other health professionals will continue to increase as our population ages, rates of chronic disease continue to rise, and more Americans gain access to preventive and chronic disease health care services. The Obama-Biden plan will help our health care workforce grow by expanding funding for loan repayment, adequate reimbursement, grants for training curricula, the Nurse Reinvestment Act of Title VIII of the Public Health Act, and infrastructure support to improve working conditions. The Obama-Biden plan to double cancer research funding will also help recruit and retain clinical researchers who specialize in cancer by providing adequate funding for oncological study. In addition, investing in health information technology and practice redesign will free up time of physicians and clinical personnel to care for patients, not cater to insurance companies. And the Obama-Biden investment in cancer research will directly benefit our nation's cancer centers, which are at the front line in the effort to eradicate cancer and are largely responsible for training the cancer workforce that will practice in the United States.

**Support Advances in Personalized Medicine:** Barack Obama has been a congressional leader in bringing attention to the potential of genomics to improve treatment and develop cures for Americans with cancer. Genomics is the study of gene structure and function, and researchers have started using genomics to increase understanding of diseases and develop better diagnostic tools and treatments. As a Senator, Barack Obama introduced the Genomics and Personalized Medicine Act to create an interagency task force on genomics research, modernize FDA review of genomics tests and expand support to genomics researchers, including funding and creation of a new mechanism to allow researchers across the country to access and analyze genomics research. As president, Obama will continue to support advances in personalized medicine to help ensure early detection and treatment of cancer and other diseases.

**Provide New Supports to Cancer Survivors and their Families:** Barack Obama and Joe Biden recognize that the majority of individuals diagnosed with cancer live for over five years after diagnosis,<sup>7</sup> and they will implement a comprehensive agenda to support the unique needs of cancer survivors. Obama and Biden will direct the CDC to develop and carry out an epidemiologic study on cancer survivors to understand their long-term health needs. The Obama-Biden plan will also foster efforts to expand psychosocial supports to cancer survivors, including directing the CDC to identify and replicate successful support group programs for cancer survivors. Finally, the Obama-Biden plan will provide the CDC \$50 million in new funding to determine the most effective approaches that assist not only navigation of cancer patients through diagnosis and treatment processes, but also provide easy-to-understand information on the necessary follow-up steps to ensure continued lifelong health.

**Identify Health Impacts of Environmental Factors:** Barack Obama and Joe Biden believe it is critical to understand the relationship between environmental factors and risk or onset of disease, particularly cancer. They support the efforts of Senators Clinton and Hatch to expand CDC biomonitoring programs, and as president, Obama will expand the collaboration between the CDC and state public health agencies across the country to increase understanding and improve treatment of individuals negatively affected by environmental factors.

Paid for by Obama for America

<sup>1</sup> American Cancer Society, "Cancer Facts & Figures 2008", <http://www.cancer.org/downloads/STT/2008CAFFfinalsecured.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Lance Armstrong Foundation, "Cancer Statistics", [http://www.livestrong.org/site/c.khLXK1PxHmF/b.3224461/k.A2DE/Cancer\\_Statistics.htm](http://www.livestrong.org/site/c.khLXK1PxHmF/b.3224461/k.A2DE/Cancer_Statistics.htm)

<sup>3</sup> Wall Street Journal, 05/31/08

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<sup>4</sup> Ward, Halpern, Schrag, et al, “Association of Insurance with Cancer Care Utilization and Outcomes”, CA: A Cancer Journal for Clinicians, 2008

<sup>5</sup> Leukemia and Lymphoma Society, 10/09/07, [http://www.lls.org/all\\_news\\_detail.adp?cat\\_id=140&item\\_id=492805](http://www.lls.org/all_news_detail.adp?cat_id=140&item_id=492805)

<sup>6</sup> Center for Workforce Studies, “Forecasting the Supply of and Demand for Oncologists”, March 2007, <http://www.asco.org/ASCO/Downloads/Cancer%20Research/Oncology%20Workforce%20Report%20FINAL.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> Lance Armstrong Foundation, “Cancer Statistics”, [http://www.livestrong.org/site/c.khLXK1PxHmF/b.3224461/k.A2DE/Cancer\\_Statistics.htm](http://www.livestrong.org/site/c.khLXK1PxHmF/b.3224461/k.A2DE/Cancer_Statistics.htm)