

*Press Release from the Office of the Speaker of the House:  
Members Named To Health Care Reform Overhaul Committee*

April 27, 2010

*Presiding Officers name members to Joint Select Committee on Health Care Reform Opportunities and Implementation – Committee to meet through the summer and fall and recommend legislation to the next legislature*

AUGUSTA– The Speaker of the Maine House and the President of the Senate have named members to a bi-partisan group of legislators to examine national health care reform and prepare the state for implementation of the new law. The Joint Select Committee on Health Care Reform Opportunities and Implementation was created unanimously by the Legislature earlier this year and will begin meeting in the near future.

“Maine has been a leader in advancing important consumer protections and finding innovative solutions to the high cost of health care,” said Speaker of the House Hannah Pingree. “The federal health care reform law will be phased in over several years, but many provisions will take effect this year, so it is important that the next legislature be prepared to take actions or remove obstacles so that Maine citizens and businesses can get greater access to affordable, quality health care”

The Joint Select Committee will study federal health care reform legislation enacted by the United States Congress to determine the State's opportunities for health care reform and the State's role in implementation of federal legislation. Their focus will include the impact of federal legislation on existing state law and programs that provide access to health care for Mainers and on the State's MaineCare program, the role of the State in the implementation and oversight of a health insurance exchange, and the opportunity for the State to conduct pilot projects, among other items.

“Everyone I talk to ranks limited access and the high cost of health care as significant barriers to our quality of life and the cost of doing business. By working to maximize the benefits of national health reform, we will make it easier for Maine businesses to provide health insurance for their workers and easier for Maine people to see a doctor when they are sick,” President Mitchell said. “This committee will create state policies that implement certain reforms immediately and establish the infrastructure to execute the remaining provisions as they take effect.”

Because health care reform is so sweeping and will affect a number of different policy areas, the 17 member Joint select committee is comprised of the members of three existing joint standing committees. Members of the Joint Standing Insurance and Financial Services, the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services and the Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs are all represented.

“Maine has a tremendous opportunity to craft its own approach to expanding access to health care and implementing insurance reforms within the framework of the federal law,” said Rep. Sharon Treat, who currently serves as the House Chair of the Insurance and Financial Services Committee. “I am looking forward to co-chairing the Joint Select Committee, made up of very knowledgeable and experienced legislators from both parties. My hope and expectation is the committee will carry out significant outreach to stakeholders, develop expertise on the details of the federal law, and offer the next Governor and Legislature a thoughtful roadmap for implementing reform in a manner that complements the best of what we already do and makes sure that the needs of consumers, health providers and employers are met.”

The Joint Select Committee will be working with several other groups and interested parties through the next few months in order to prepare for any necessary policy changes. On April 23rd Governor Baldacci announced a taskforce to implement national health reform and prepare for any non-legislative changes the state needs to make.

“Maine has been ahead of the game in terms of consumer protections and containing sky rocketing costs, but there is more work to do,” said Senator Joe Brannigan. “I am excited to work with legislators whose areas of expertise range from health care, to insurance to financial affairs as we create the policies that will provide near universal access to health care for Maine people.”

**Joint Select Committee on Health Care Reform Opportunities and Implementation**

**Senate:** Sen. Joe Brannigan (D-Cumberland)  
Sen. Justin Alford (D-Cumberland)

Sen. Margaret Craven (D-Androscoggin)

Sen. Kevin Raye (R-Washington)

Sen. Earle McCormick (R-Kennebec)

**House:** Rep. Sharon Treat, Chair (D – Hallowell)

Rep. Charles Priest (D – Brunswick)

Rep. Adam Goode (D – Bangor)

Rep. Mark Eves (D – North Berwick)

Rep. Linda Sanborn (D- Gorham)

Rep. Emily Cain (D – Orono)

Rep. Lisa Miller (D – Somerville)

Rep. Gary Connor (D – Kennebunk)

Rep. Meredith Strang Burgess (R – Cumberland)

Rep. Wes Richardson (R – Warren)

Rep. Les Fossel (R – Alna)

Rep. Pat Flood (R – Winthrop)

The text of the Joint Order establishing the committee can be viewed here:

[http://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/bills/display\\_ps.asp?paper=HP1262&PID=1456&snum=124](http://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/bills/display_ps.asp?paper=HP1262&PID=1456&snum=124)