**Journal Tracking Assignment**

Principle of Public Relations

Jenae Stolarzyk

Stephanie Feirn

Lukas VanHammond

Karie Zoril

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, in 2006, forty-five percent of the U.S. population was uninsured for healthcare. When gathering health care information from The New York Times, Chicago Tribune, USA Today and the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, we were able to conclude that affordable health insurance and comprehensive benefits were at the top of every U.S. Citizen’s agendas. However, one major problem that stands in the way of affordable insurance to everyone: who will pay? This debate is one for the record books, with the division of Republicans and Democrats who have divided the country into two halves. With each newspaper covering the story to their full advantage, we were able to find more insight on this historical debate.

President Obama, Congress, Democrat, Republicans, and active and non-active publics are the top five influential stakeholders in the healthcare controversy. President Obama’s new goal as the leader of our country is to ensure that all Americans receive health coverage that is affordable. This may sound like a perfect plan, but the unanswered question that still remains is who will pay for this new found health care for low income families. During our tracking assignment we found that each newspaper had an abundance of information on this subject with stakeholders effectively conveying their message to the audience.

For instance, the New York Times provided us with the fact of disapproval from Americans on the Democrats in Congress deliberating about the new Health Care Plan. Citizens have no idea how the plan will affect their family budget and medical bills. President Obama and Democrats in congress urge Americans that an increase in higher taxes for the wealthy and insurance companies will cover payments that were unable to be received by low income families. They intend to provide every family with a health care plan and cheaper medical insurance. Over the course of the three week period, Democrats in Congress seem to stick to their initial opinions about taxing wealthy families and insurance companies, but were also able to look into taxing small business and middle income families as well. The overall approval of this message to Americans did not ease well, and a larger debate is at hand. Middle Class Americans disagree with the proposed idea to raise their taxes to support low income families. Insurance companies and small business owners are appalled that Democrats in Congress intend to raise their taxes. The overall approval rating for the intended message that health care will be cheaper for Americans has taken a turn for the worse. According to Pollingreport.com fifty-one percent of Americans already disapprove of the new health care reform and thirty-one percent feel they will be worse off enduring it.

When it comes to influential stakeholder President Barrack Obama, The Chicago Tribune states he has joined the tax battle between the Democrats insisting that the cost of new Health Care for Americans must be paid for by the increase in taxes and spending cuts so that it does not add to the federal deficit. Obama relays messages to his intended audience through many tactics such as news media and congressional conferences. He wants American to understand the important need for everyone to receive health care, and with our levels of economy we should help each other out. His goal is to produce health coverage for every U.S citizen through the increase in taxes for middle class. Some Democrats such as Senator Max Baucus and Senate Majority Leader Harry Reed feel that high Income families should be taxed more in order to gain effectiveness with low and middle income families. The performance of Obama’s intended messages through U.S citizens has increasingly declined giving him a forty-two percent disapproval rating after the heath care debate.

According to USA Today, President Obama wants to see what will happen with the new health care plan being considered by the government. Those invested in many of the articles were President himself, but another was a Senator, George LeMieux. Obama has been quoted saying he wants to see more bipartisanship over the bill; major discontent between the two parties will never solve anything. This relates back to how President Obama wants to see things run smoother with the crafting of the bill, hoping to see the appropriate people get taxed here in America. Throughout the three week tracking period we were able to determine that President Obama has guaranteed Americans a new health care plan even if it cost more than Americans are willing to pay.

Subsequently, Republicans are strongly against taxing middle and high class families for the health care plan. Instead Republicans are trying to get doctors to donate cash in order to fund health care for low income families. The results have thus proved to be somewhat beneficial with cash donations totaling one point three million so far. Republicans are sending the message to doctors throughout the country that a donation for health care is going to be beneficial for every middle and high income family. It appears Republicans are still going full throttle with encouraging doctors to help with the cause. In return more doctors are becoming interested in helping out low income families and donating more funds for health insurance. Republicans are using tactics to get their message across with the help of news releases and web pages. Their intended purpose is to avoid having a tax placed on middle class to high class families in hopes of having others pay for low income families health care plans.

 Our five influential stakeholders have the experience to control the minds of citizens into believing in certain government ideas. When we were tracking Obama’s new health care plan, we found the stakeholders messages to be direct. Each message had a specific strategy that approached a situation the stakeholders wanted to convey. By using tactics such as donations to keep the tax increase down and taxing small businesses to help with the overwhelming increase in taxes for middles class Americans will ultimately influence citizens to key stakeholders opinions.

The intended purpose of the healthcare messages is to inform citizen’s that it will be a long process when figuring out how uninsured Americans will afford healthcare. High paid specialists would have no stake in prevention medicine and primary care would soon vanish.

 With the use of some public opinion, representatives such as, President Obama and Nancy Pelosi are trying to present positive messages from the health care plan. The Health Research Organization and the Kaiser Foundation created a calculator with the purpose to figure out insurance costs for those buying insurance on their own. The calculator allows the user to plug in their age, family status, income, and high-low cost region. Currently, there is no definite plan to take action, what the most appropriate action should be, and when the bill will go into effect.

Andrew R. Heinze, former professor at San Jose State and Berkeley, stated “I’m preparing for life without health insurance and unless I’m the only person covered under the Empire Blue Cross/ Blue Shield “Traditions Plus” plan, a lot of other people will end up just like me, uninsured.” We feel there has been a steady reoccurrence within the three week tracking period for citizens that disapprove with the new health care plan. Currently only forty-seven percent of Americans think providing health insurance is a government responsibility, down from sixty- nine percent just two years ago, stated from realclearpolitics.com. Democrats argue that low public approval ratings should not affect the time or cost of the new health care plan.

 However, this is not coming across as a positive issue because Government is ignoring public opinion. Seventy-one percent of publics told Congress that they are paying too little attention to what citizens are saying. Active publics need to be recognized in this issue because they have the ability to change the outcome of the health care plan. We have seen a change over this journal tracking period with publics getting more upset and more involved within the issue. Since the United States Census in 2006, forty-six million Americans had no health insurance and nine million of those were children, with percentages rising over the years. Publics that have no health insurance will be greatly impacted by the new proposed health plan. The Senate Finance Committee health care legislation would provide coverage to twenty- nine million uninsured Americans, but would stop the growth of spending on medical care according to the Congressional Budget Office.

 **Reform that displays strong public option is more reasonable then leaving a few people without health care.** Publics argue that everyone should support themselves due to the bad decisions made in economical history. According to the Kaiser Foundation, sixty- seven percent of U.S residents are strongly in favor of establishing a public health insurance option similar to Medicare, but for those that support this plan must now be aware that in order to establish this public health care plan Government would have an unfair advantage over Insurance Companies. Recently the public opinion has decreases to thirty two percent in favor of a public health plan after understanding government involvement.

One major change we learned about through our tracking period was observing the shift from public dissertation to approved political debate. Bipartisan efforts were needed to move the bill along, a republican senator, Olympia Snowe, was one of the main reasons the bill was cleared for debate. We also observed wavering support for the bill, although insurers once vowed to be allies with the bill, once debate was opened up their support was questioned.

Over the course of this journal tracking, our group discovered that most publics would desire comprehensive benefits and affordable health care. Although much progress has been made; this will continue to be to lengthy process that requires detailed attention from stakeholders and the public’s they are trying to persuade.