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Obama Creates Health Care Reform Office Inside White House

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By Fred Lucas, Staff Writer

(CNSNews.com) – With health care reform a central focus of his administration, President Barack Obama issued an executive order Wednesday establishing an office in the White House to oversee an overhaul of the nation's medical industry.

The order created the White House Office of Health Reform, which will coordinate health care goals throughout the executive branch and work with state and local policy makers to consider new reforms.

“Reforming the health care system is a key goal of my administration,” Obama’s executive order says. “The health care system suffers from serious and pervasive problems; access to health care is constrained by high and rising costs; and the quality of care is not consistent and must be improved, in order to improve the health of our citizens and our economic security.”

Already, the Obama administration has promoted its health reform plan that would allow people to choose between employer-based health insurance and a government-run system currently limited to federal workers.

Elements of his health care priorities have already been signed into law. The stimulus bill included \$1.1 billion for a comparative effectiveness council, to decide which treatments are most effective, and the digitizing of each American’s health records for information sharing. Some free market advocates fear that using the data from the digital records for the effectiveness council will lead to health care rationing seen in countries such as England and Canada.

The president’s Fiscal Year 2010 budget proposal states that the electronic database and the comparative effectiveness research will be used together.

“Building on the unprecedented \$1.1 billion included in the recovery act for comparative effective research, the administration will continue efforts to produce state-of-the-science information on what medical treatments work best for a given condition,” the Obama [budget proposal](#) says on page 70.

“When coupled with electronic health records, these findings can form the basis for clinical decision support tools – distilling all available evidence on the outcomes of different treatment options into user-friendly pop-up alerts for physicians at the point of care. These findings can thereby enhance medical decision-making by patients and their physicians,” the administration’s budget proposal says.

The new office will be run by White House Health Reform Director Nancy-Ann DeParle.

White House offices that will be involved include the Domestic Policy Council, the National Economic Council,

the Council of Economic Advisors, the Office of Management and Budget, the Department of Health and Human Services and the Office of Personnel Management.

The health reform office will “work with departments and agencies to ensure that federal government policy decisions and program are consistent with the president’s stated goals with respect to health reform,” the executive order says.

The order also says the new office will “work with state, local and community policymakers and public officials to expand coverage, improve quality and efficiency, and slow the growth of health care costs.”

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