

You have probably heard that President Barack Obama signed into law his medical reform bill. 'Obama Care' is its nick name. Some people are very excited about this new development, and other people are not. The question of whether the U.S. needs universal health care has been debated for months. The government has been split about the idea. Democrats, in general, are in favor of it, but Republicans have not wanted it. The main problem is cost. The U.S. spends more on health care than any other country. There are lots of federal programs that help people receive health care. The two biggest ones are Medicare and Medicaid. Medicare supplies low-cost health insurance to the elderly and disabled, while Medicaid is for the poor. All of these programs are very expensive to run, and yet not everybody is covered. There are millions who have no health care coverage. Even those who can afford health insurance are not guaranteed help for all of their needs; some who have a pre-existing condition are refused help for that illness. Another problem has been the huge expense of medicine in this country. Lots of people actually go to Canada to buy cheaper medicine. Regulations need to be made on how much pharmaceutical companies can charge for their products. Historically, costs have also risen because of the many malpractice lawsuits, and the legal system allows huge sums of money to be paid in compensation. This has driven up costs in general. There is a lot of work to be done in the government to make the system fair. I suppose health care systems always need to be monitored and improved. Personally, I agree with universal health care coverage. It must be absolutely dreadful to be in a position where you cannot get medical care for your own children or other loved ones. Plus, a

healthy nation is a productive one. Mind you, I can also see the Republican's concerns about 'big government' and too much taxing of citizens. The central question is, as far as I can see, a person's right to have health care. It's a moral question, not just a financial one. So it becomes a little more complicated. Perhaps, if the government is smart about the details, this could be the beginning of a very good thing.

### **Grammar notes.**

Medical system related vocabulary: universal coverage, health insurance, pharmaceutical, to reform.

1. Universal coverage is when everyone is covered, or has access to something.
2. People pay health insurance companies every month, the same way we pay car insurance companies.
3. The pharmaceutical companies are very wealthy and have a lot of power.
4. The health system is being reformed; it is being changed and updated.

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