

Dr. Burgess Weekly Video Address August 17, 2012
“Guaranteed Access to Health Insurance”

Hello. This is your congressman, Michael Burgess. For far too long, Republicans have been criticized for not having alternatives to major parts of the president’s health care law. As chairman of the Congressional Health Caucus, I have had multiple forums that have addressed reform ideas and if anything, I think we have shown there are a multitude of free market ideas on health care reform.

One policy that I believe we can all get behind addresses the needs of Americans with what are called pre-existing conditions. As a physician it is a priority of mine to ensure that those with pre-existing conditions have access to quality and affordable health insurance. That’s why I introduced The Guaranteed Access to Health Insurance Act of 2012, H.R. 6283. This legislation will provide states the financial backing to decide how best to provide coverage for this population through risk pools, reinsurance programs or other innovative methods.

There are currently 35 states operating high risk pools. These pools serve over 200,000 Americans. Unfortunately, the current state based programs are underfunded and do lack the ability to meet the needs of the state. It has been shown that state based programs play an important role in lowering costs across markets and in providing coverage options for those with preexisting conditions. This legislation will appropriate funds for grants that the states can then begin to set up for these programs and will ensure funding for their programs.

Unlike many of the complaints of the pre-existing condition insurance plan, this was the national plan set up under the president’s health care law. This legislation does not require those with pre-existing conditions to jump through hoops, or remain uninsured for six months before being eligible for coverage. This is a straight forward solution to a very complex and emotionally charged problem.

Thank you for taking the time to listen. For more information about this issue and for other issues before the United States Congress please visit my website at burgess.house.gov. May God bless you and your family, and as always, may God bless Texas.