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CANCER SURVIVOR

Doug Ulman

Doug Ulman is a three-time cancer survivor and president of the Lance Armstrong Foundation.

THE DAILY DOSE



The Rundown

Much has changed in Washington over the last two weeks, but according to a host of new surveys, public opinion hasn't.

Interactive: [What does the bill mean for you?](#)

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Goodbye, dirty tricks

Is the health care overhaul perfect? Absolutely not.

From some angles, the work is just beginning. We have legislation now, but that legislation has to be put into policy. Patient advocacy groups will have a particularly important role in helping shape new offices and agencies like the Health Insurance Exchanges and the National Prevention, Health Promotion and Public Health Council. We've seen the sausage-making that went into the bill. Equally important is the execution that will take place outside the spotlight.

But the reason many in the cancer community are elated are the tangible benefits right around the corner and the elimination of the worst of the dirty tricks practiced by insurers.

Cancer survivors like me will no longer have to swallow the discrimination that so many of us face today. When I was diagnosed with cancer three times at the age of 19, I found out the hard way there would be no insurance company willing to offer me affordable coverage. In the future, other young survivors won't face that harsh reality.

Young adults across the country will also benefit from the flexibility of being able to stay on their parent's insurance plan until the age of 26.

And perhaps most importantly, within six months, insurers will no longer be allowed to use the dirtiest trick of all - terminating someone's coverage when they become sick. Over the years, the Lance Armstrong Foundation has heard countless heart-breaking stories of families driven into financial ruin trying to pay for a loved one's care while the insurance company waves goodbye. Luckily, those stories stop now.

Is it perfect? No.

Is it strong and welcome progress? Absolutely.

BY DOUG ULMAN | MARCH 30, 2010; 6:19 PM ET

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