



New Year “Must Reads”?

Everyone is coming out with their “must read” or “best of” lists. As we head into 2009, we know that health care reform will occupy a significant portion of legislative efforts. So, the Congressional Budget Office published two major reports on health care reform and released them a few days before the holidays. (Sorry, too late for most Christmas lists.)

The first report is entitled *Key Issues in Analyzing Major Health Insurance Proposals*. This report deals with current national health care issues from a broad policy perspective. The report analyzes the nation’s current healthcare situation from a number of economic and regulatory perspectives. For example, the report discusses approaches for reducing the number of uninsured people, factors affecting insurance premiums, proposals affecting choice of an insurance plan, factors affecting the supply and processing of health care services, changes in health habits and medical practices, and effects on total health care spending.

The second report is entitled *Budget Options, Volume I: Health Care*. This report analyzes 115 specific types of proposals for the financing and delivery of healthcare and health benefits. The report analyzes these proposals in the general areas of the health benefits market, taxation of benefits, availability of benefits, quality and efficiency of health care, spending for Medicare, spending for Medicaid, the federal health programs, long-term care, health behavior, health promotion, and other topics. Best of all, this is only volume one—we don’t yet know how many other volumes are to follow.

Both reports are highly researched and deeply detailed.

Okay, so these reports may not make anyone’s best seller list. And they are not light reading. But, for those of us in health benefits, these reports will provide valuable background for analyzing and discussing the numerous reform proposals we can expect to see in 2009.

Happy New Year from Haynes Benefits!

Here are the website addresses for the two reports:

Key Issues: <http://www.cbo.gov/ftpdocs/99xx/doc9924/12-18-KeyIssues.pdf>.

Budget Options: <http://www.cbo.gov/ftpdocs/99xx/doc9925/12-18-HealthOptions.pdf>.