



American Rescue Plan Health Provisions

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Executive Summary

On Jan. 14, President-elect Joe Biden released an overview of his \$1.9 trillion COVID-19 relief package titled the “American Rescue Plan.” The proposal aims to improve vaccination efforts, increase coronavirus testing, bolster domestic production in the medical supply chain and expand access to and improve the quality of care during the pandemic.

President-elect Biden seeks to create a National Vaccination Program to expand access to vaccines and testing, especially for underserved populations, and employ 100,000 public health workers to assist in the effort. The proposal also reaffirms the president-elect’s commitment to fully invoke the Defense Production Act and expand domestic production of critical medical supplies. Finally, the proposal seeks to address the pandemic’s impact on health and calls for increased funding for mental health services, veterans’ health services, and survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault.

Next Steps

- Many of the COVID-19 relief provisions in the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021 will expire this March, including unemployment insurance and the Paycheck Protection Program. Congress will aim to pass another bill before those popular provisions expire, setting up a two-month sprint at the beginning of President-elect Biden's term.
- Democratic leaders in the House and Senate will begin drafting legislative text that includes the priorities laid out by President-elect Biden. The bill may also include provisions from the HEROES Act, a COVID-19 relief bill that passed the House last year with near-complete Democratic support but did not move in the Republican-controlled Senate.
- To pass the Senate through regular order, a COVID-19 relief bill must attract some bipartisan support to meet the 60-vote filibuster-proof threshold in the Senate.

Topline Amounts

Total Proposal Amount: \$1.9 trillion

- \$20 billion for the National Vaccination Program
- \$50 billion to expand testing for COVID-19
- \$30 billion for the Disaster Relief Fund
- \$130 billion to support schools in safely reopening
- \$10 billion for expanding domestic manufacturing for pandemic supplies
- \$4 billion for the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration and the Health Resources and Services Administration
- \$20 billion for veterans' health care
- \$800 million to protect survivors of violence and sexual assault

National Vaccination Program and Expanded Testing and Tracking

- The \$20 billion national vaccination program would expand access to the vaccine by launching community vaccination centers around the country and deploying mobile vaccination units to hard-to-reach areas. All individuals would be vaccinated free-of-charge, regardless of immigration status.
- President-elect Biden proposes expanding the Federal Medicaid Assistance Percentage (FMAP) to 100% for the administration of vaccines.
- The \$50 billion expansion of testing efforts would include funds for the purchase of rapid tests, investments to expand lab capacity, and support to help schools and local governments implement regular testing protocols. It aims to reach a level where schools and congregate living facilities can regularly test their populations to facilitate reopening. Under the proposal, any American could get a test for free if they need one.
- In response to the emergence of variant strains of the virus, the proposal includes increased funding for sequencing, surveillance and outbreak analytics capacity at the levels demanded by the crisis.
- The proposal gives schools the ability to access Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Disaster Relief Fund resources to get reimbursed for certain COVID-19-related expenses and receive support to implement regular testing protocols.

Public Health Workforce and Underserved Populations

- The proposal calls for the employment of 100,000 public health workers to perform vaccine outreach and contact tracing in their local communities. After the pandemic, these workers would transition into community health roles to build long-term public health capacity and improve quality of care.
- In order to address health disparities brought to light by the pandemic, the proposal includes funding to provide health services for underserved populations and ensure equitable distribution of vaccines by expanding Community Health Centers and investing in health services on tribal lands.
- The president-elect aims to provide funding for states to deploy “strike teams” to long-term care facilities to conduct infection control during a COVID-19 outbreak. The proposal would also provide funding for COVID-19 mitigation strategies in prisons, jails and detention centers.

Medical Supply Chain

- In order to fulfill the president-elect's commitment to fully invoke the Defense Production Act, the proposal adds \$30 billion to the Disaster Relief Fund to ensure sufficient supplies and personal protective equipment, and to provide 100% federal reimbursement for critical emergency response resources to states, local governments and tribes, including deployment of the National Guard. The proposal specifically cites the shortage of supplies like gloves, masks, glass vials and testing reagents as inhibiting the widespread availability of testing and vaccinations.
- The proposal calls for an additional \$10 billion investment in expanding domestic manufacturing for pandemic supplies.
- The proposal aims to increase investments in the development, manufacturing and purchase of therapies to ensure wide availability and affordability of effective treatments. It also seeks to conduct studies of the long-term health impacts of COVID-19 and potential therapies to address them.

Health Care Taxes and Services

- The proposal calls on Congress to subsidize COBRA through the end of September in an effort to ensure access to health coverage for the millions of people who lost employer-sponsored health insurance since the start of the pandemic.
- President-elect Biden's plan asks Congress to expand and increase the value of the Premium Tax Credit to lower or eliminate health insurance premiums and ensure enrollees will not pay more than 8.5% of their income for coverage.
- The president-elect calls on Congress to appropriate \$4 billion to enable the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) to expand access to mental health services and substance use disorder treatment.
- The proposal also asks Congress to provide an additional \$20 billion for veterans' health care and at least \$800 million in supplemental funding for key federal programs that protect survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault.