

Dr. Song's plan versus universal publicly financed primary care (UPC). How are they different?

Below are the key differences between Dr. Song's notion of a "public utility" and "common fund" as opposed to Universal Publicly Financed Primary Care (UPC).

We hope these considerations will encourage the House Health Care Committee to include a study of an operational plan and a financing plan of universal publicly financed primary care for the reasons listed below.

We would also encourage you to invite Dr. Deb Richter to come to testify because she can illuminate the differences between these two approaches.

Consideration of any health policy should include the following questions:

1. Is it universal? UPC is universal. Dr. Song's plan is not universal,
2. Is it sustainable? UPC is sustainable. Dr. Song's is not sustainable because it is based on how many people have private insurance.
3. Is it fairly financed? UPC will be progressive because it is public financing according to ability to pay. Dr. Song's is not progressive because the funding for private insurance is not progressive or equitable.
4. Does it need an ERISA waiver? UPC does not need an ERISA waiver because it is simply a public good, and self-insured plans can simply decide they no longer need to cover private insurance. Dr. Song's plan needs it because self-insured plans are included as giving into the common fund.
5. What waivers are needed? UPC will need a Section 1332 waiver and Medicaid waivers, and so will Dr. Song's plan.
6. Administrative cost: UPC pays for primary care directly and there is no administrative burden of dealing with private insurance with primary care. Dr. Song's plan will entail much more administrative cost because there will be so many private insurance plans to keep track of.
7. Simplicity of PMPM payments: If a Per Member Per Month payment comes from a single payer it is a predictable amount (UPC). In Dr. Song's plan the "Common Fund" comes from many different insurance plans. It is a fluctuating amount.
8. Churning effect: UPC will cover everyone continuously from year to year, so there is no churning effect. Dr. Song's plan will have churning because people frequently move between one plan or another from year to year and therefore so will the payment for them.

9. What is covered? UPC includes mental health and substance use disorder services. These are not included in Dr. Song's plan.
10. Does this address the impending catastrophic federal cuts coming in 2027? UPC relies on a tax base, but Dr. Song's plan creates a Common Fund which is based on the number of insured people, and this will continue to shrink with federal cuts.

-- Submitted to House Health by Ethan Parke, Ellen Oxfeld and Dr. Deb Richter (5/4/26).