

# **AMERICAN HEALTH BENEFITS PROGRAM ACT OF 2008**

**CONGRESSMAN JAMES R. LANGEVIN**

**CONGRESSMAN CHRISTOPHER SHAYS**

## **HEALTH BENEFITS COMMISSION**

Based on current projections, health care spending will continue increasing absent cost containment measures. Our legislation recognizes this problem and creates a Health Benefits Commission to make recommendations to Congress on measures that can slow the growth of health care spending.

### **Who will be on the Commission?**

There will be 9 commissioners. The Chair and Vice Chair, as well as two other members, will be chosen by the Comptroller General. The President, Majority and Minority Leaders of the Senate and the Speaker and Minority Leader of the House will each choose one representative.

### **What issues will the Commission examine?**

The Commission shall examine and make recommendations regarding the major issues and cost drivers affecting the delivery of health care services as it pertains to the American Health Benefits Program. Within the legislation, we specifically direct the commission to examine:

1. A comparison of AHBP to other public health insurance programs.
2. The proper implementation and utilization of electronic medical records and other health information technologies, including privacy and interoperability issues.
3. The effects of medical malpractice insurance and “defensive medicine” on the delivery and cost of health care.
4. The patterns and effects of overutilization on AHBP.
5. Cost and implementation factors of retiree health coverage under AHBP.
6. A comparison of prescription drug prices under AHBP to other public health programs.
7. The effects of insurance monopolies on health care costs and delivery.

### **When will the Commission report to Congress?**

Following enactment, The Commission will transmit its initial findings after six months, and will provide its first report containing cost containment recommendations after 18 months.

### **What powers will the Commission have?**

The Commission will have the power to call hearings, require the Government Accountability Office to conduct studies it sees fit, and require the Congressional Budget Office to conduct cost estimates.