

Health Plans from Top Democratic Presidential Candidates: A Comparison

Healthcare remains a pressing concern for voters heading into the 2020 presidential election. Many of the Democratic candidates have put forward detailed policy proposals for expanding healthcare access and affordability. The table below offers a broad overview of the healthcare plans proposed by the major contenders in the 2020 Democratic Primary, focusing on coverage, affordability, access, and drug pricing.



Healthcare remains a pressing concern for voters heading into the 2020 presidential election. Many of the Democratic candidates have put forward detailed policy proposals for expanding healthcare access and affordability. While some candidates favor systemic overhauls to the current healthcare system, others suggest building upon the existing structure rather than starting from scratch. Although most of the plans are similar, their various distinctions provide insight into the priorities of the candidates and how they view the role of players in the current healthcare system.

The table below offers a broad overview of the healthcare plans proposed by the major contenders in the 2020 Democratic Primary, focusing on coverage, affordability, access, and drug pricing. The top five candidates included in the table are based on highest national polling average. All five candidates have qualified for the next Democratic debate on November 20, 2019.

	Vice President Joe Biden	Senator Bernie Sanders	Senator Elizabeth Warren	Senator Kamala Harris	Mayor Pete Buttigieg
Coverage Expansion	Allows individuals to buy into a public health insurance program similar to Medicare	Creates a single federal insurance program with comprehensive benefits for all US residents	Within the first 100 days allows individuals to buy into a public health insurance program similar to Medicare By third year creates a single federal insurance program with comprehensive benefits for all US residents	Creates a new Medicare system that will include every US resident	Allows individuals to buy into a public health insurance program similar to Medicare

	Vice President Joe Biden	Senator Bernie Sanders	Senator Elizabeth Warren	Senator Kamala Harris	Mayor Pete Buttigieg
Maintains employer-sponsored insurance	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Maintains private insurance	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
Federal insurance program premiums	Yes – Premiums capped at 8.5% of household income	None	Yes – Premiums capped at 5% of income and phased out over time	Yes – Premium payments for households with incomes greater than \$100,000	Yes – Premiums capped at 8.5% of household income
Changes to tax credits	Yes – Eliminates the 400% income cap on tax credit eligibility Tax credits based on gold plan	No	No	Yes	Yes – Tax credits based on gold plan
Authorizes Secretary of HHS to negotiate drug prices	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Allows drug importation	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Eliminates pay-for-delay	No	No	Yes – Office of Drug Manufacturing authorized to manufacture generic drugs in instances where there is little to no competition and the price of the drug has spiked	No	Yes
Eliminates surprise billing	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Increases reimbursement for providers working in rural communities	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Increases funding for community health centers	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes

	Vice President Joe Biden	Senator Bernie Sanders	Senator Elizabeth Warren	Senator Kamala Harris	Mayor Pete Buttigieg
Increases number of providers in rural areas	Yes – Establishes grant program to help community health centers hire social workers to coordinate necessary resources	No	Yes – Lifts the cap on medical residency placements Scales up apprenticeship programs	Yes – Increases residency slots for rural areas with workforce shortages	Yes – Expands funding for training models that incentivize medical students and residents to work in rural communities
Expands funding for mental health services	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

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