



Sample Speech

Place responsibility for solving the problem with citizens collectively. Trigger the value of practical problem-solving.

New Hampshire is like no other place in the country. We are practical people and we bring common sense to our civic life. It is the true benefit of our local government structure. Granite Staters hash things out from a very pragmatic perspective, and once we've weighed our options, we act. Well, I'm here to suggest to you, that it is time for us to focus New Hampshire practicality on solving a problem that has gone on far too long. Our healthcare system is at a crossroads when it comes to assuring quality, affordable healthcare for all the citizens of New Hampshire. We can solve this problem, but only if we are willing to take a realistic look at the price we are paying now for the system we never built.

Describe health care coverage as a system.

Over the course of our nation's history, we have built a series of modern networks that are essential to our economy and our quality of life – electrical power grids, phone systems, water systems, interstate highways, and the Internet to name a few. But with health coverage, we're stuck in the 1940s, because we have never begun building any modern infrastructure for health coverage. Instead, we rely on a hit-or-miss, inefficient and unreliable approach which leaves many without coverage. We have the equivalent of scattered wells, individual generators, and county roads but no Health Coverage Infrastructure we can rely on, no systems for making sure that people have health coverage.

Use a Simplifying Model to connect the insured and uninsured in one system. Define the problem as instability.

This affects us all, because the high number of uninsured puts the health care system under significant stress. Think of the state's health coverage system as a structure held up by supporting pillars. Insured people are like the pillars that hold up the health care system, by paying in, whether a little or a lot, for their care. People without insurance still use the Health Care System, but they are the missing pillars because they are not paying in regularly, and not helping to support the system. These millions of missing pillars are threatening the stability of the health care system and increasing the costs for those who remain in the system. We won't be able to get a handle on the increasing cost of healthcare until we address the uninsured.

Discuss situations that lead to being uninsured, not the individuals who are uninsured.

Take a moment to think about how common it is to be without health insurance. There are any number of situations in which we can find ourselves where health care coverage is unavailable: small businesses that cannot afford to provide coverage, young adults starting their first job, people who are newly separated or divorced, those who would like to retire early – the list goes on. These gaps are making the health coverage system unstable. We need to find ways to bring everyone in to share the costs and benefits of the health care system.

Explain the concept of prevention and link it to cost inefficiency.

We all know what happens when a person is without health coverage. You pray that no one in your family gets sick. When you do feel sick, you self-medicate with over-the-counter products and hope that the problem will go away. If the symptoms worsen, and you can't ignore it any longer, you end up in the emergency room. This isn't healthcare. It's catastrophic care. An ER doctor told me that one of every three patients he sees is uninsured. Health problems that could've been addressed easily and inexpensively turn into serious health problems that cost serious dollars. Since there is no insurance coverage to pay the bill, the cost gets passed on to the rest of us. Finding ways to bring everyone in to share the costs and benefits of the healthcare system is the cost-effective thing to do and the right thing to do.

Introduce step-by-step planning.

We don't have to fix all the problems at once. In New Hampshire we like to take things one step at a time. But we need to get started with small but meaningful steps that will stabilize the system for us all. Otherwise, things are likely to get worse.

Emphasize situations that lead to uninsurance,

New Hampshire, more than most states, relies upon small businesses, and small businesses have been under particular pressure from rising health care costs. I've talked with at least a dozen small business owners who have always provided health insurance to their employees, but now worry that they won't be able to do so much longer. The owner of a local auto shop told me he is the last mechanic in town to provide healthcare to his employees. He's torn between providing insurance for his employees and remaining cost competitive. If he is forced out of the health coverage system, that's another missing pillar that results in more instability to the system and a greater weight on the rest of us. We need to find ways to level the playing field and help small business owners provide for their employees.

Emphasize situations. Reinforce common

We all know people in their late fifties and early sixties who've worked hard all their lives, saved for a secure retirement, and would like to retire early to enjoy life. But they continue to work for health insurance. Why wouldn't we allow these people to buy into Medicare early? It's simple common sense. There are all sorts of common sense steps like this that we can take now to stabilize the system, but we need to get to work.

C.E. Stowe provides us with a wonderful definition of “common sense.”
“Common sense is the knack of seeing things as they are, and doing things as they ought to be done.”

*Reinforce responsible
management and*

It’s time for us to take a hard look at our health coverage system, and begin to shape it into what it ought to be. Dealing with this challenge, rather than letting it get worse, is the responsible thing to do. It’s what we teach our kids, and it’s how we try to handle problems in our day-to-day lives. You don’t ignore a problem, you figure out a plan for addressing it and you take it one step at a time. It’s time to get started now.