

Beyond Market Reform in Health Care Study Proposal 08.11

1. Describe your project idea, including clearly defining the problems and specific policy questions to be addressed.

What does market reform in the provision of medical care address and what doesn't it address in our current health care system? With such a long history in health care access and market reform, the Citizens League should examine whether market reform can be the entire solution in health care or if it is really just part of the solution and whether there are specific issues that market reform does not address very well (access, portability, etc.). With the passage of significant market reform legislation in 2008, these questions should be addressed as the implementation of market reforms begin.

2. Why is this problem important?

Health care reform in Minnesota has become a battle between market reform and a "single-payer" approach. The assumption is that the two approaches are mutually exclusive and attempt to address the same set of problems in our health care system. That may not be true and the political turmoil does not help us take on our current problems.

3. How could the Citizens League make a unique contribution?

The Citizens League has a policy history that is intertwined with health care policy back to the 1950s. The Citizens League was involved in the decisions around Certificate of Need (CON) in the 1970s and 1980s and the beginnings of Minnesota Care in the late 1980s and early 1990s. As an organization that has pushed for market reform and access, the Citizens League would be in a unique position to address this large-scale question with credibility.

4. What are the prospects that the project would yield recommendations that could be implemented and have a major impact on the problem?

As market reforms move ahead, there will continue to be a political push for a single payer approach to health care. The recommendations from this proposal could be helpful with the implementation of market reform (by clearly defining what we think it can do) and by identifying other approaches that might be needed in addition to market reforms.

5. Explain how this problem can be addressed by data, research, and reason? Identify probable sources for data and research.

The amount of data and research available on a state, national and international level that attempts to analyze various approaches to health care is voluminous. The Citizens League can help identify what is most important to help decision-making in Minnesota. The Minnesota Department of Health is charged with implementing much of the upcoming market reforms and already provides a great deal of Minnesota specific data. National and international sources will be more important in looking at various other approaches (single payer, etc.)

6. Explain how this proposal can be framed without partisan bias.

The 2008 effort for market reform was a bi-partisan effort. This would be an attempt to expand that bipartisan discussion to those who felt "left out" politically by the market reform approach on the left and the right.

7. Why would this project be attractive to members?

Members have been strongly involved in the health care work and some have expressed concern that market reform is not a comprehensive solution to health problems that we currently face.

8. How would this project reach out to under-represented segments of the community?

Issues such as health care access, affordability, and portability would all be areas to attract those affected by the problem who are not the well-represented by the provider and employer interests that are a big part of the market reform efforts. The Citizens League should be able to attract those who were not attracted to that effort.

9. What is the potential for making this issue visible to a broader public? Why?

It already is a big, visible issue to the public and this would give the Citizens League the opportunity to help find common ground in the public discussion.

10. What resources—funding, experts, etc. might be available to support this project?

Not aware of any funding prospects. Minnesota is full of expertise on health care reform.