

cmag EYE on healthcare

The Advertising Research Newsletter for Politics, Public Affairs and Advocacy Professionals

Monitoring the Pulse of Healthcare Advertising

Although energy continues to be this election's most visible issue — racking up almost \$153.3 million in general election ad spending — the healthcare system remains a concern to voters, as just over \$55 million has been spent in 2008 on advertising to address the topic. From cries for universal healthcare to demands for lower drug

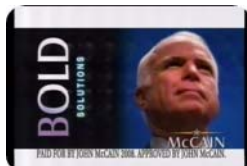


prices to simply a call for reform, politicians and interest groups on both sides of the aisle are asking voters to keep healthcare on their minds come November. With 70 percent of all political spending occurring during the last 60 days of an election, expect to see more than \$183 million worth of healthcare ads in the upcoming months.

President

Although both presidential candidates address the need for affordable healthcare in their ads, the solutions they propose to fix the system differ.

Senator Barack Obama discusses creating universal healthcare programs in his ads, while Senator John McCain outlines his plan to provide tax credits for families.



PFB: JOHN MCCAIN 2008

So far in the general election, Obama spent almost \$68.9 million on 41 ads. Approximately \$23.2 million of this total went to five ads mentioning healthcare. For example, in his ad *The Country I Love*, Obama describes, among other issues, how he extended healthcare for troops. On the other hand, McCain has dedicated just over \$3.8 million of his \$61.6 million total on five ads relating to healthcare. Two of these ads, *Health Solutions* and *Healthcare Action*, detail McCain's plan to, "...require millionaires to get off prescription drug subsidies, end junk lawsuits that tax consumers, lower prescription drug prices through importation programs."



PFB: OBAMA FOR AMERICA

Issue

In the mid-90s, health insurance providers released the "Harry and Louise" series of ads to criticize First Lady Hillary Clinton's healthcare plan. The couple reunited on the 2008 campaign trail, this time calling for healthcare reform. Sponsored by five organiza-

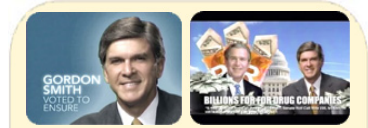
tions, the ad describes how "too many people are falling through the cracks." The ad ran primarily on cable news channels such as CNN and MSNBC for the two weeks of the Republican and Democratic National Conventions at a cost of over \$1.2 million.

Continued on page 2...

Senate/House

Almost \$5.6 million has been spent on healthcare ads targeting U.S. Senate races during the general election. Spending more than \$2 million, Senatorial candidates in Oregon outspent every other Senate race in the country on ads addressing the issue. So far in the general election, Democrat Jeff Merkley has spent almost \$191,000 on one ad examining how healthcare, along with other facets of life, has been affected by outsourced jobs and free trade. Incumbent Senator Gordon Smith, a Republican, spent almost \$812,000 on five ads mentioning healthcare. In *Across the Aisle*, Smith describes how healthcare costs must be lowered and how he worked with both parties to protect the healthcare system.

In terms of healthcare-related ad spending, Oregon's Senatorial race has been dominated by



— *The U.S. Chamber of Commerce and SEIU are just two of several issue groups releasing ads targeting Oregon's Senate race.*

independent expenditures, which have spent more than \$1 million on the issue. Shelling out almost \$547,000, SEIU COPE ran one ad criticizing Smith's healthcare record, claiming he has done little to lower the cost of healthcare and gave tax breaks to drug companies. Meanwhile, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce has spent \$175,000 on an ad highlighting Smith's work to provide seniors access to healthcare and affordable prescription drugs.

Continued on page 2...

A Closer Look: HEALTHCARE'S TOP 5

Top Healthcare Advertisers by Estimated Spending (in millions) in the General Election		
1.	Obama For America	\$23.2
2.	AARP	\$12.8
3.	John McCain 2008	\$3.8
4.	SEIU COPE	\$1.8
5.	Health Care First Org.	\$1.2



— *Harry and Louise returned to bring healthcare to the top of the agenda.*

In This Corner:

— HEALTHCARE REFORM —



[Woman]: "My dad brought the family to America because he thought he'll be able to provide a better



lifestyle and to achieve this American dream. My mother was diagnosed with



brain cancer and we had insurance, but yet not everything was covered.

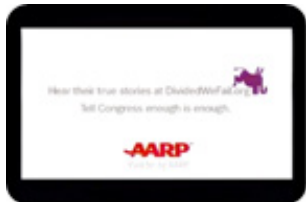


Basically, we weren't able to keep up with the bills and eventually he had to file bankruptcy. Having insurance,



he thought it would cover everything and take care of him..."

[Text on screen]: *1.85 million Americans go bankrupt due to medical bills in one year.*



[Woman]: "...but apparently it doesn't."

[Text on screen]: *Hear their true stories at DividedWeFail.org. Tell Congress enough is enough.*

Ad Sponsor: AARP
Ad Title: "Brain Cancer"

...Continued from page 1

Senate/House In Congressional races, healthcare has proved to be a partisan issue. While Democrats spent almost \$2.3 million on healthcare-related ads, approximately \$189,000 was spent on the issue by Republicans. Ads from both parties called for reform and mentioned the need for better healthcare for veterans. The effect of taxes and illegal immigration on the healthcare system was popular in conservatives' ads, whereas liberals discussed their plans for universal healthcare and coverage for seniors.



Issue AARP has also stepped up its advertising, spending approximately \$12.8 million to date during the general election on its "Divided We Fail" campaign. These ads request politicians look beyond party politics to create a comprehensive plan for healthcare reform. In addition to ads featuring clips of speeches by McCain and Obama, AARP ran several ads showing how an unexpected medical bill or trip to the emergency room can cause bankruptcy.



[Mom walks into crowded waiting room with injured child]
[Mom]: "I need to see a doctor right away."



[Nurse]: "Fill these out, take a number... Number seven? Number seven?"



[Patient 1]: "I think number seven's gone..."
[Nurse covers dead man with a sheet]



[Nurse]: "Number eight?"
[Announcer]: Do you want the same people who run the motor vehicles department...
[Nurse puts up 'Closed for Lunch' sign and leaves]



[Patient 2]: "But I've been here since yesterday."
[Announcer]: ...In charge of your healthcare? Call your state representative



and say you want your doctor in charge of your healthcare, not the government.

Ad Sponsor: Coalition for Responsible Healthcare Solutions
Ad Title: "Government Run Healthcare"

eye

Interested in seeing other issues in the cmag eye?

Keep up with the latest political advertising data and issues across the country

Find out more by visiting us at tnsmi-cmag.com or calling us at (703) 379-8906