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## Election 2008 | Edwards Unveils Strategy for Combating HIV/AIDS in U.S., Worldwide

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Former Sen. [John Edwards](#) (N.C.), who is running for the Democratic presidential nomination, on Monday at a health care forum in Washington, D.C., unveiled a plan for combating HIV/AIDS in the U.S. and worldwide, the [Washington Post](#) reports (Bacon, *Washington Post*, 9/25). The forum, sponsored by [Families USA](#) and the [Federation of American Hospitals](#), over the next few months will host presidential candidates from both parties individually in one-hour webcast forums in which a media panel will ask the candidates questions about their health care proposals ([Kaiser Daily Health Policy Report](#), 9/20).

Edwards on Monday called for spending \$50 billion over five years on HIV/AIDS treatment and re-assessing whether to use [World Health Organization](#) standards, rather than [FDA](#) standards, to speed the availability of new antiretroviral drugs (Lowy, [AP/Google.com](#), 9/24). According to Edwards' campaign [Web site](#), the funding would be used to provide preventive and treatment drugs for HIV/AIDS, as well as malaria and tuberculosis (Edwards Web site, 9/25).

Edwards also said that as president, he would expand Medicaid to cover HIV-positive people before they progress to AIDS or are otherwise disabled; increase resources to combat the spread of the virus among blacks and Hispanics; ensure "age-appropriate" sex education; and lift the ban on federal funding for needle exchange initiatives (Leys, [Des Moines Register](#), 9/25). He also called for a Cabinet-level post on global poverty (*Washington Post*, 9/25).

Edwards also discussed his plan for universal health care. "We can't talk seriously about ending HIV/AIDS without guaranteeing health for every single man, woman and child in America," Edwards said, adding, "If you don't have health insurance -- good health insurance -- you are substantially more likely to die from this disease" (Leys, *Des Moines Register*, 9/25).

### Forum Schedule

According to the current schedule for the forums, Rep. [Dennis Kucinich](#) (D-Ohio) and Sen. [Joe Biden](#) (D-Del.) will appear on Oct. 25; Sen. [John McCain](#) (R-Ariz.) will appear on Oct. 31; Sen. [Chris Dodd](#) (D-Conn.) will appear on Nov. 1; and Sen. [Sam Brownback](#) (R-Kan.) will appear on Nov. 7. Sen. [Hillary Rodham Clinton](#) (D-N.Y.), New Mexico Gov. [Bill Richardson](#) (D), former Arkansas Gov. [Mike Huckabee](#) (R) and Rep. [Ron Paul](#) (R-Texas) also have agreed to participate in the forums. The sponsors of the forums have invited all of the presidential candidates to participate.

Susan Dentzer of PBS' "[The News Hour With Jim Lehrer](#)" will moderate the forums, and additional panelists will include Julie Rovner of [NPR](#), Laurie McGinley of the *Wall Street Journal* and Timothy Johnson of [ABC News](#).

The [Kaiser Family Foundation](#) will host the forums in its Barbara Jordan Conference Center in Washington, D.C. Kaiser will webcast the forums live through [kaisernetwork.org](#), its health policy news and information service. Live and archived webcasts, as well as additional information about the forums, are available on a dedicated Web site, <http://presidentialforums.health08.org>. The forums are being funded by [The California Endowment](#) and the [Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation](#) (*Kaiser Daily Health Policy Report*, 9/20).

■ A Webcast of the forum is available [online](#). An exclusive interview with Edwards also is available [online](#) at [health08.org](#), a site from the Kaiser Family Foundation following health issues and the election.

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