

Waxman Maps Health Agenda for Next Congress

Posted By [Scott Hensley](#) On December 9, 2008 @ 3:57 pm Rep. Henry Waxman, incoming chairman of the House Energy and Commerce Committee, has started laying out his health-care priorities in the new role.

High on the list after Congress comes back next year: more scrutiny of drug marketing. Waxman, [long a critic of the drug industry](#), talked about his approach and the emerging legislative agenda at a meeting yesterday, sponsored by the Prescription Project, an advocacy group.

The group live-blogged the event [here](#). A few highlights:

Health reform under Obama, Waxman said, is doable and even more important in light of the downturn in the economy. Also high on Congress' to-do list next year are help for the states on Medicaid and an expansion of the State Children's Health Insurance Plan.

It may please [Merck to learn that clearing the way for generic biotech drugs](#) is another Waxman priority.

Waxman's take on drug marketing might not be as popular with Big Pharma. He voiced support for legislation that would give FDA the power to ban direct-to-consumer advertising for some drugs during their first two years on the market.

And, he said, Congress should take action on marketing to doctors, too. One idea he supports: Sen. Herb Kohl's (D., Wisc.) academic detailing initiative, the Independent Drug Education and Outreach Act. That's [also a favorite](#) of the Prescription Project.