



**McCain Discusses Health Care at LIVESTRONG Summit Town
Hall Meeting
McCain Part 2 and Roundtable
LIVESTRONG
July 24, 2008**

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SEN. JOHN MCCAIN (R-ARIZ.): -to funding new treatments and cures. One essential step is to better coordinate the efforts of public and private research institutions. As it is, breakthroughs in the laboratory often take too long, too, too long to reach patients in the hospital.

Everyone engaged in the cause of treating and curing cancer is a stakeholder in the same great enterprise and when advances are made, no policy or government and no policy of government or active government should delay their deployment to the frontlines in the battle against cancer [applause].

There are many ways to hasten the delivery of lifesaving treatments and one of the surest ways is to streamline the process of clinical trials. Usually when cancer patients seek to participate in a clinical trial, as we all know, they run out of established options. That trial may be their last hope.

We need to do all in our power to extend that hope to all who need it. As a Senator, I have co-sponsored legislation to broaden access to clinical trials and support reforms, to modernize the registry for clinical trial information.

Under my administration, the FDA and the Department of Health and Human Services will work closely, closely with the private sector and make the expansion of clinical trials a

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priority. By far, by far the best prescription for good health is to steer clear of high-risk behaviors and as Lance mentioned, the most obvious of all is tobacco use and the smoking of cigarettes, which still accounts of so much avoidable suffering. Most smokers would love to quit but find it hard to do so. I quit 29 years ago as having been a [applause] two-pack a day smoker [applause].

I would like to tell you very briefly, some years ago I was involved in an effort on the floor of the United States Senate to bring about meaningful action to bring about the tobacco companies under, a meaningful effort to bring about the cessation of use of tobacco products in this country and I am sorry to tell you, to stand before you and tell you we were defeated. We were defeated by the special interests and then there was an agreement and I think many of you are familiar with, between the attorney generals and the tobacco companies and there, a lot of the tax money on packs of cigarettes was given to the states and the states were supposed to use it for anti-tobacco treatment of tobacco-related illness and advertising to combat, amongst young people, use of tobacco products.

I am sorry to stand before you tonight and tell you that not one state is using that tobacco money for that purpose. It is disgraceful and when you go back to your

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respective states [applause], tell them to use that money for the purpose that it was intended and we all know, we all know my friends that anti-tobacco advertising works making young people aware of the evils of the use of tobacco works. It has been proven. What is happening, the money from the taxes on a pack of cigarettes is not going for the purpose that it was intended.

Throughout our health care system, the great goal is to make the best care available to everyone. Underlying the many things that trouble our health care system are the fundamental problems of cost and access. These rising costs are by no means always accompanied by better quality and care or coverage.

I believe the key to real reform is to restore control over our health care system to the patients themselves. Under my plan, we will build on the employer-based coverage by offering generous tax credits directly to individuals and families for the purchase of health insurance.

The health care plan you choose would be as good as any that an employer could choose for you or even better. By providing incentives for coverage of wellness, prevention, and other methods of avoiding the onset of chronic disease, these health plans would be yours and yours to keep.

Some worry that even after this reform, many Americans with pre-existing conditions including many thousands of cancer

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patients could still be denied insurance. I will make sure they get the high quality coverage they need. I proposed a guaranteed access program or GAP that will combine industry, state, and federal resources to help in the purchase of coverage for those hardest to insure including patients with pre-existing conditions.

There would be no limits on premiums and lower income Americans would get additional financial assistance. The cooperation among states in the purchase of insurance would also be a crucial step in ridding the market of both needless and costly regulations and the dominance in the market of only a few insurance companies.

We need to break down these barriers to competition, creativity, and excellence with a goal of establishing a national market to make innovative policies and lowest prices available to every person in every state.

Sometimes in our political debates, the health care system of America is criticized as if it were just one more thing to argue about and the oncologists and cancer researchers with us tonight might grow a little discouraged at times listening to campaign debate health care but I trust you will never lose sight of the fact that you are each involved in one of the great vocations doing some of the greatest work there is to be done in this world.

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Some of the cancer patients you meet are in the worst hours of their lives filled with fear, heartache, and the confident presence of a doctor with a knowledge that researchers like you are on the case, could be all that they have to hold on to. That is a gift only you can give and you deserve the gratitude of our country.

I thank you for all your contributions to the work of the Lance Armstrong Foundation and I wish you success in the even greater work that lies ahead. Thank you very much [applause].

LANCE ARMSTRONG: I get to go first.

PAULA ZAHN: A to Z. I think that means you go first.

LANCE ARMSTRONG: A-

PAULA ZAHN: We got you covered, A, M, Z.

LANCE ARMSTRONG: We will start with an easy question [laughter]. We were, yesterday I was in Washington, D.C. at the National Press Club with our past four Surgeons General and for those of you who think that sounds funny, I think it sounds funny too but anyway, the Surgeon General, when you have more than one of them it is the Surgeons General I do not understand it either but [laughter], anyway we-

SEN. JOHN MCCAIN (R-ARIZ.): Attorneys General.

LANCE ARMSTRONG: Attorneys General.

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SEN. JOHN MCCAIN (R-ARIZ.): It took me a long time to, anyway go ahead.

LANCE ARMSTRONG: Tours De France not Tour De Frances [laughter]. I have heard that too but point being Dr. Carmona and the other Surgeons General and the Foundation announced a call to action and I had a very random question by, it was a lot of press there and one of the people from the press stood up and said of both candidates for President, which one would you prefer to work out with [laughter]? And I did not know [laughter]. So my question is what does Senator McCain do to stay fit [laughter]. Then I will tell you what I said [laughter] [applause].

SEN. JOHN MCCAIN (R-ARIZ.): Since I keep up, I think I remember a quote that you did not want to hang with either one of us.

LANCE ARMSTRONG: Oh I said that? You are right [laughter] oh.

SEN. JOHN MCCAIN (R-ARIZ.): I think I-

LANCE ARMSTRONG: You see what Google has done to the world [laughter]?

SEN. JOHN MCCAIN (R-ARIZ.): I go on the Internet. No, yes.

LANCE ARMSTRONG: Excuse me, I said neither of them can hang [laughter].

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SEN. JOHN MCCAIN (R-ARIZ): Ah. That is even worst [laughter]. May I say also, you mentioned Dr. Carmona, Vietnam veteran, emergency room physicians, and now Surgeon General of the United States. He is one of the great American success stories and we are proud that he practiced and lived in Tucson, Arizona.

I hike. I swim. I do light exercise. I love to hike around my beautiful state. Two summers ago, one of my sons and I hiked rim to rim the Grand Canyon. It took us three days but it is one of the great experiences that you can ever have and I get up and do exercise but I can also tell you that campaigning is pretty good exercise [laughter].

PAULA ZAHN: And the food is very delicious, is it not?

SEN. JOHN MCCAIN (R-ARIZ.): There you go and you never get to eat. Because you are always speaking while other are eating or dozing [laughter]. So it really is a lot of exercise, working the rope line, shaking hands with people, going from one place to another but I also, we have a place in Northern Arizona, it is on Old Creek, which is one of the beautiful places in the world and I do go in the very shallow water there but mainly it is through hiking that I enjoy because you can enjoy the great natural beauty as well as getting your exercise.

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PAULA ZAHN: Alright, so now that we have talked about diet and exercise, can we talk about tobacco? You made it very clear how strongly you feel about the use of tobacco and we know that half of all cancers in this country are preventable. A third of the cancer is caused by smoking.

I am just curious when you know a lot of people out here believe that if you were to raise the federal cigarette tax that it would, in fact, cause fewer younger people to smoke and might even deter people who already, adults who are smoking from smoking anymore.

As President, would you support the increase of a federal tax on tobacco?

SEN. JOHN MCCAIN (R-ARIZ.): I do not think I would because I do not think the money is being spent on the state taxes right now. I would have to be confident before I would consider it that it would not be taken by the Congress and put into general revenues. The way the states have done with the tobacco taxes that they impose and they put it in the general revenues.

My friends, while we were, before they became completely in the tank, we were showing reductions amongst the use of tobacco of young people through the effective use of anti-tobacco funds and advertising and it was all over America but particularly in some states like California.

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So my first thing that would have to happen is I have to be assured that that money would be put in the right place and to tell you the truth I am not confident that the Congress of the United States would do that because does anybody here have confidence in Congress? Please raise your hand [laughter]. You are one of the nine percent approval rating of Congress today.

PAULA ZAHN: So is there any circumstance that that could be proven to you? That was a direct correlation between taxes going up and the use of tobacco going down?

SEN. JOHN MCCAIN (R-ARIZ.): It would have to be proven and frankly the constitution of this Congress, they could not prove it to me because I do not believe in them. I do not. I have seen corruption in Congress, okay. I have seen that.

PAULA ZAHN: Imagine that, corruption?

SEN. JOHN MCCAIN (R-ARIZ.): We have four members of Congress now residing in federal prison. So we would have to clean up Congress and I think the American people [applause] are ready to do that [applause].

LANCE ARMSTRONG: Just to piggyback on that—

SEN. JOHN MCCAIN (R-ARIZ.): By the way, I am not for raising the taxes of anybody. I think, right now with these economic problems we have, lower taxes is what we need [applause].

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LANCE ARMSTRONG: Just to pick up on the tobacco issue and then we will shift, well we have talked a lot about tobacco.

SEN. JOHN MCCAIN (R-ARIZ.): I think it is a very important issue.

LANCE ARMSTRONG: Absolutely. If you talk to, I will tell you a couple of things. If you talk to the smartest people involved in this fight, they will all tell you that that is the single biggest issue we face. I will also tell you that further testimony that we heard at the Cancer Panel of the President, tobacco spends roughly \$15 billion a year to market its product, \$15 billion.

We, as a society, as a country, spend about \$5 billion a year to fight the entire disease. Tobacco spends \$15 billion to market it, which primarily goes towards young people and people that are just starting to figure out whether or not they pick up a cigarette or try a cigarette, etc. Should the FDA regulate tobacco?

SEN. JOHN MCCAIN (R-ARIZ.): I believe so but I also believe that there is another number here and you probably know it and I do not know it, how much do they spend overseas in advertising particularly in Third World countries where you are seeing increase in tobacco usage in an incredible fashion and

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killing lots of people around the world. It is really disgraceful.

LANCE ARMSTRONG: It is also estimated that in the 21st century alone, it is 100 years, tobacco-related illness, disease, and death will cause 1 billion deaths in China alone. So in 100 years, 1 billion deaths due to one product. These are just the numbers.

SEN. JOHN MCCAIN (R-ARIZ): Could I also mention we gave away, in World War II, to all of the men and women who were serving in military free cigarettes and you are seeing the effects of that in the increases in lung cancer and others because we, as a country, basically encouraged people to use tobacco. I can remember when I was a young Navy pilot. On the ship, they would say quote, the smoking lamp is lit, which meant everybody could have a cigarette. I remember going down to the ready room as a pilot, a room where the pilots gathered before we fly and everybody smoked. I was one of them.

So I really do think we have come a long way in many areas. You mentioned Bloomberg in New York City and other places but we still have a long way to go.

PAULA ZAHN: Can I come back to a point you were making earlier about corruption within Congress because I want to—

SEN. JOHN MCCAIN (R-ARIZ.): Sure.

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PAULA ZAHN: -Make sure I am understanding what you were saying and interpreting this correctly. Are you essentially saying that those members of Congress are being bought and sold by the tobacco lobbies and that is why this issue will not move forward?

SEN. JOHN MCCAIN (R-ARIZ.): I believe that the reason why we failed in enacting the legislation that passed through the Commerce Committee that I was Chairman of with one dissenting vote, that the reason why we failed was because of the influence of the tobacco companies, yes. Any objective observer would tell you that.

PAULA ZAHN: So as President, what would you do about that? How do you stop that?

SEN. JOHN MCCAIN (R-ARIZ.): I would lead America. I would lead America and I would tell the American people to clean up this mess. My friends, how many people just were shocked when they filled up their gas tank? Do you know what Congress is doing today to try to address our energy problems? They are in gridlock, gridlock, doing nothing. They are doing nothing. It is time Americans put our country first and our parties second [applause].

PAULA ZAHN: Can I ask one last, I promise this will be my last tobacco question.

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SEN. JOHN MCCAIN (R-ARIZ.): So Paula, if you ask anyone who observed our efforts to enact this legislation at the time, they will tell you that it was the influence of the tobacco company. Now there were many members of Congress and I do not know which ones that had honestly held views about an opposition to the legislation that we reported out of the committee that I chaired and I respect those honestly held views but I also believe that the tobacco companies played a very big role in making sure that legislation did not pass the United States Senate.

PAULA ZAHN: So what is it that members of Congress are afraid of in going up against the tobacco industry? I mean obviously we know the kind of money that is contributed to campaigns—

SEN. JOHN MCCAIN (R-ARIZ.): I am not sure.

PAULA ZAHN: Above and beyond that, what is the fear?

SEN. JOHN MCCAIN (R-ARIZ.): I am not sure that they are afraid. I think they are rewarded.

PAULA ZAHN: They are?

SEN. JOHN MCCAIN (R-ARIZ.): Rewarded.

PAULA ZAHN: Rewarded in what way?

SEN. JOHN MCCAIN (R-ARIZ.): Campaign contributions, many other ways. There are many ways that that happens in Washington.

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PAULA ZAHN: And how do you stop that?

SEN. JOHN MCCAIN (R-ARIZ.): Well the American people are sick and tired of being sick and tired and they want Washington cleaned up and I will lead that effort. I did not win Miss Congeniality in the United States Senate again this year [laughter] because I took on the special interests. I have taken on the special interests. I join with Russ Feingold in the campaign finance reform.

I have joined with Ted Kennedy on immigration reform and, by the way my friends, we all know that Ted Kennedy is in our thoughts and prayers. He is a lion in winter and we need him and we need him. He is in our prayers.

So I have taken on the special interests and I have fought against them. As President of the United States, I think I could be much more effective. I think that is what Presidents can do.

LANCE ARMSTRONG: So I have been, just in this whole process of reading these newspapers that I referred to earlier and watching the news channels that constantly cover, this election, this makes the Super Bowl look small. It is unbelievable. There is constant coverage, which I think is great for the most part.

Through this process, I have seen and this is just speaking from fact, I have seen your opponent say that the

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equivalent, or voting for you is the equivalent of voting for a third George Bush administration. This is what I have read.

The second thing I will say, again a fact, that for the third year in a row, the current administration has shrunk the budget at the National Cancer Institute. This is a fact. If you are elected President, will we continue to see that trend or we will reverse that trend and actually increase funding at the National Cancer Institute?

SEN. JOHN MCCAIN (R-ARIZ.): We will reverse that trend [applause] but I also [applause] think we have got to establish and I know you agree with this because I think that you do not enjoy traveling to Washington all the time and having meetings with members of Congress. Some of them are very interesting people but I am sure that you probably have something else you would like to do.

I think that we ought to all support a better method of apportioning the funds by using the best minds in America of every kind, whether it be scientific or health care providers or whatever experts it is so that we can make sure that whatever money it is, is going in the most effective way and would lead us to on the path of success in the struggle against various forms of cancer or other diseases.

There is, unfortunately, a competition as you know, between the important advocates and the addressing adequately

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so many of the challenges that America faces in the area of health and other areas.

So I would like to see some really, they do this to some degree, do not get me wrong, you know that there is, well you are on the council on Cancer of the President but I would like to see more of us being given guidance by the community that you have been so heavily involved in so that we can better apportion whatever funds there are in the most effective fashion. I would like to see that coupled with it.

LANCE ARMSTRONG: I will tell you that we hear that a lot whenever we spend time on the Hill. We hear from our leaders, either the President or the Head of Health and Human Services or the head of the NIH, NCI, everybody in Congress—

SEN. JOHN MCCAIN (R-ARIZ.): And do you not sometimes you feel, Lance, like you are competing with people who also have very legitimate causes?

LANCE ARMSTRONG: Correct and that is what they say. I mean if you sit down, for example, you will sit down with the Senate and say listen, an hour ago it was, I heard from the heart disease group and the next hour is Parkinson's, the hour after that is obesity and then it is diabetes, and then it is, and then within your own subset, your own disease, yesterday I had the women in here from, the breast cancer survivors in here and tomorrow, I have got the old guys coming in here that

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survived prostate cancer, and now you young guys are in here with this, and it is true. We really need, and I think that is the beauty of this event and it has been our approach all along is that we think we needed a united approach here. This is one disease [applause] absolutely [applause].

So I have no idea who is going to be the President but if I were the President, which I will not be thank goodness [laughter], I want to make sure I heard what you said—

SEN. JOHN MCCAIN (R-ARIZ.): You could probably run [laughter] [applause].

LANCE ARMSTRONG: Anybody can run. Anybody can run. Let us start with Governor first and then we will, I am just kidding, just kidding, just kidding, just kidding but I want to make sure I heard you right. You would decrease that trend? I mean I am sorry, you would reverse that trend?

SEN. JOHN MCCAIN (R-ARIZ.): Oh sure.

LANCE ARMSTRONG: Okay. Thank you.

PAULA ZAHN: Can you tell us by how much though? Your Democratic candidates at the forum in the fall were saying they would double and they would triple the NCI and NIH budget, double, triple. Those are big numbers [applause].

SEN. JOHN MCCAIN (R-ARIZ.): And I could throw out, how about quadruple and quintuple? How would that sound?

LANCE ARMSTRONG: Hold on one second.

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SEN. JOHN MCCAIN (R-ARIZ.): Quintuple or sextuple or whatever it is that you want to say. The point is one, we have got to pay for it and two, we have to apportion it correctly. So it is easy particularly, in all candor, for liberals to go out and say I will give you all this. You know that the debt we laid on you, future generations of Americans, do you know that Medicare, which is a vital safety net is \$40-some trillion in debt, unfunded liability?

So when you go out and you say I am going to double or triple or quadruple the amount of money, I would like to not lay the debt for it on the next generation of Americans who are not going to receive the same social security benefits [applause], who are not going to receive Medicare [applause].

So I think we need some fiscal responsibility in Congress also. So I am willing to, the first thing I want to do is cut out the pork barrel projects. You keep mentioning my opponent or my opponents. I have never asked for a single pork barrel project for my state, not a one, never [applause]. My opponents asked the \$932 million in pork barrel projects, literally \$1 million for every working day that he has been in the United States Senate.

So if you want to talk about spending money, I know how to spend money. Everybody does but I promise you, my friends, I

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am going to lay that debt on the next generation of Americans.
We are going to pay for it.

PAULA ZAHN: So you are not going to give us any hard numbers then as President then—

SEN. JOHN MCCAIN (R-ARIZ.): I could give you some hard numbers about 9,000 pork barrel projects and \$18 billion in pork barrel projects that we have accounted for that we could take and immediately transfer that Senator Obama continues to vote for and I continue to vote against.

So I would be glad to give you some numbers but I would also like to give you a couple other numbers. How about six trillion, I believe it is, unfunded debt is social security. See these young people here? They are going to have to pay that bill.

Let me give you another number, \$40-some trillion in unfunded liability from Medicare. In other words, sometime I would like for you to meet a guy named David Walker who used to be the head of the Government Accountability Office and he is now works with the Concord Coalition and he will come and give you a presentation about this debt that we are laying on the next generation of Americans. I do not think that is fair Paula.

I do not think it is particularly fair to say I will spend all this much more money without paying for it and

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without having it taken care of in one way or the other. So we will increase the funding my friends but we will do it because I will make these pork barreling guys famous and you will know their names and we will not spend anymore [applause]. We will not spend [applause], my friends, we will not spend \$3 million to study the DNA of bears in Montana. I do not know if that was a paternity issue or a criminal issue [laughter], okay?

We will not spend \$233 million for a bridge in Alaska to an island with 50 people on it. My friends, we will not do those things and we will take that money and we will make sure it goes to the right place and this is one of the right places.

PAULA ZAHN: One last quick question before we take some questions from the audience.

LANCE ARMSTRONG: We have questions from fellow survivors and people in the audience. I do not even know that I have a question but I will tell you that when and if you are elected President and you elect your cabinet and the rest of, I think it is important, I understand that we all, this is our family.

The United States of America is our family. This is how much we make. This is how much we get to spend. We can spend it on wars overseas. We can spend it on diseases. We can spend it on highways. However, I understand we have to work within the parameters of that budget. However, it is easy to me, it is

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easy to understand the significance of this disease when you just look at the toll that it takes on American lives.

You can look at the emotional and the human toll, 560,000 Americans die every year and this thing keeps clicking and clicking and clicking. It costs our economy 200 and I think the number is \$213 billion and we are spending five. This makes no economic sense.

Meanwhile, 560,000 Americans will not go home next year. That makes no sense morally. I think, and another thing you can also look at, since we are speaking about all of the different diseases, you can look at how we allocate money per death in the United States of America.

Cancer, quite frankly and I am not exactly sure why, cancer is underfunded. Then you can look even under the umbrella of cancer and you can say where are we spending our money with regards to the fight against cancer. You realize that lung cancer is underfunded and it is underfunded because it is an orphaned disease.

People say you smoke. It was your choice [applause] but I think we must look at the entire problem, allocate the money where it affects us the most. Does anybody remember SARS or the bird flu? Do you know how much we allocated for SARS? I mean everybody in the world thought they were going to get SARS.

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Nobody got SARS. A few people did [laughter] but the bird flu, I think Congress allocated \$7 billion immediately for SARS.

SEN. JOHN MCCAIN (R-ARIZ.): Avian flu I believe.

LANCE ARMSTRONG: Right. We do not want that either but [laughter] nonetheless, I think we have to prioritize what this disease and what certain sets of diseases, how they impact our society.

SEN. JOHN MCCAIN (R-ARIZ.): I think I am in total agreement with you and one of my opening comments when I talked about I would support increases. We have to make the right kinds of decisions in prioritizing but I would also like to point out to you that what we also need to do is scrutinize every agency of government and those that are not doing the things they were supposed to do, we should abolish those.

One of the things about [applause] bureaucracies [applause] is that once they are established, they seem to go on and on and I can identify so much. Do you know in the farm bill, my friends, we gave \$93 million in tax breaks to thoroughbred racehorse owners.

Now I am sure there are some thoroughbred racehorse owners out in the audience but not many and \$15 million for asparagus growers. The list goes on and on. We need to scrutinize these agencies of government and rather just promise increased spending, we should take those funds and then we can

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put them to the causes that are so vital. Every statistic that you mentioned, Lance, is absolutely true and frankly, as a person who had one of the toughest fights of quitting smoking, I do not think we should penalize people with lung cancer because they smoked especially when the government of the United States encouraged that at one time in our history [applause].

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