THE HEALTH REFORM “PARADIGM”

(I don’t think that’s a real word.)

“PARADIGM”

- “A set of assumptions, concepts, values, and practices that constitutes a way of viewing reality for the community that shares them, especially in an intellectual discipline.”
- In heath care, there’s no such thing. Which is rather the problem.

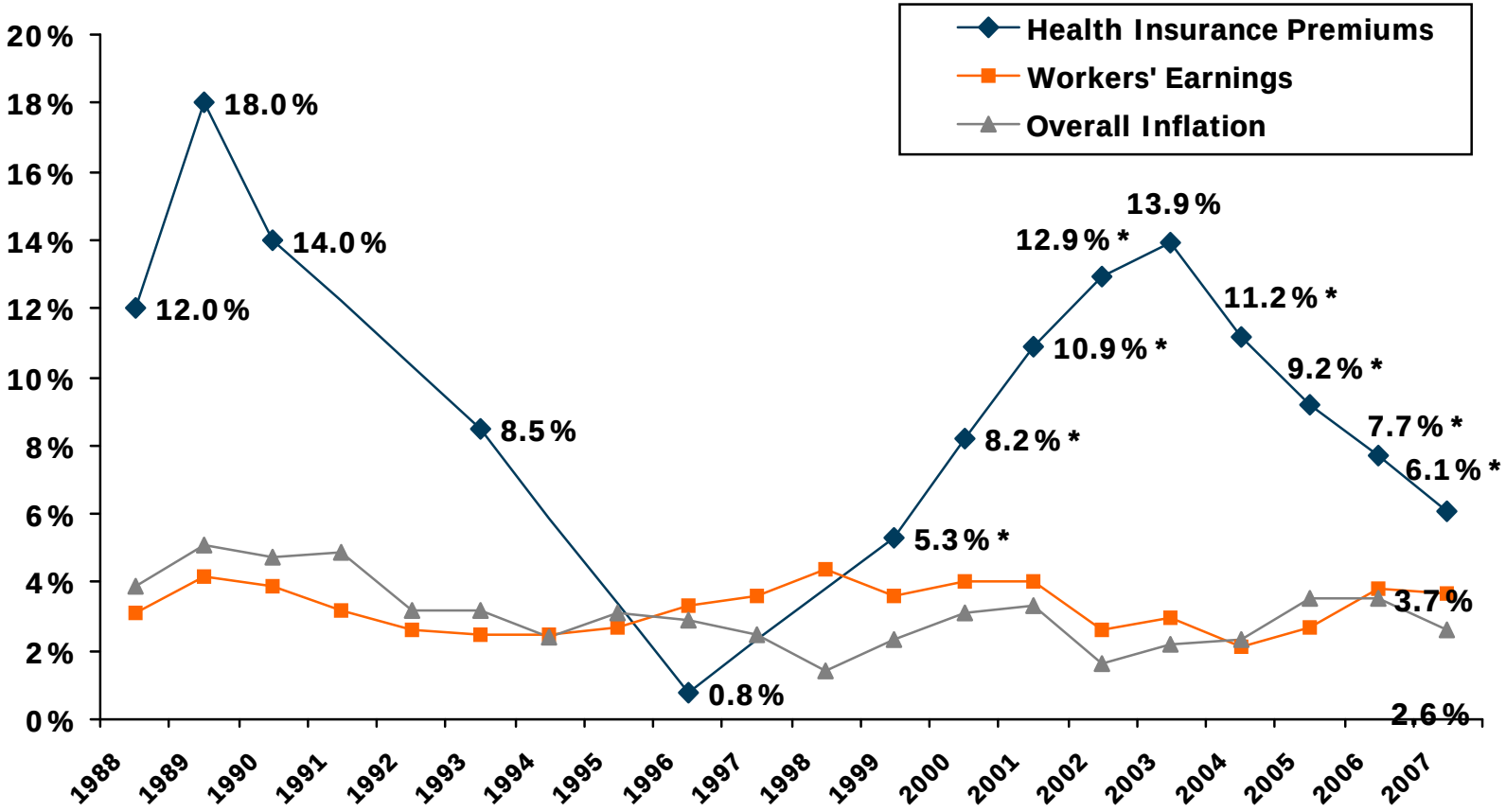
What is health reform?

- Health Care: Cost, access, quality.
- Politics: The act of getting a bill passed.

The paradox of health reform

- Access reform. Obama and Massachusetts.
- Cost reform.

Average Percentage Increase in Health Insurance Premiums Compared to Other Indicators, 1988-2007



*Estimate is statistically different from estimate for the previous year shown (p<.05). No statistical tests are conducted for years prior to 1999.

Note: Data on premium increases reflect the cost of health insurance premiums for a family of four. The average premium increase is weighted by covered workers.

Source: Kaiser/HRET Survey of Employer-Sponsored Health Benefits, 1999-2007; KPMG Survey of Employer-Sponsored Health Benefits, 1993, 1996; The Health Insurance Association of America (HIAA), 1988, 1989, 1990; Bureau of Labor Statistics, Consumer Price Index, U.S. City Average of Annual Inflation (April to April), 1988-2007; Bureau of Labor Statistics, Seasonally Adjusted Data from the Current Employment Statistics Survey, 1988-2007 (April to April).

THE HENRY J. KAISER FAMILY FOUNDATION

Ezra Klein’s First Rule of Health Reform

- Do Not Screw With What People Have.
- The first rule of cost reform: Screw with what people have

POLITICS!

- Insurers are not the enemy. Nor are pharmaceutical companies, doctors, device manufacturers, etc.
- The Senate in the enemy. Obstruction. A system designed to ensure nothing gets done.

THE PROBLEM OF THE PRESIDENT.

- Mandates.
- Max Baucus.
- FDR, Truman, Johnson, Nixon, Carter, Clinton.

The Problem of Plans

- Obama, Clinton, Clinton 1994, Edwards, McCain, Wyden-Bennett, Langevin, New America, CAP, CAF, Hacker, Ezekiel-Fuchs, Massachusetts, EPI, Bush, Cato, Heritage, Ezra Klein, France, Kennedy.
- We got plans.

Approach

- Policy dogmatists and political agnostics.
- We need to be, within reason, political dogmatists and policy agnostics.

The Budget Picture

- Health care and the bail out, the deficit, etc.
- Access alone becomes tougher.
- CBO and Wyden
- Back to the paradox.
- Which brings us back to the politics.

The “Paradigm.”

- Politics.