Presidential Rx for health

Part U.S. presidents have provided innovative leadership that shaped the landscape for our national health and science institutions.

President Lincoln established the National Academy of Sciences. President Truman's foreign policies inspired the creation of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). President Carter defeated pre-existing legislation that established Medica and Medicare.

And President Clinton signed legislation that created the State Children's Health Insuranc Program (SCHIP). Currently, our country faces significant health challenges. In order to address these challenges, we need to integrate funding mechanisms for global health programs that currently span many federal agencies while coordinating and consolidating many of the foreign health assistance programs into a restructured USAID.

By addressing these issues as well as ensuring that key federal health programs are quickly filled with visionary, innovative, and experienced leaders, our new president could write a transformative prescription to heal our country's ailing health care system, helping to ensure a healthier future for people in America and around the world.

By Susan Blumenthal, MD, former U.S. senator, assistant secretary general, is director of the Health and Medicine Program at the Center for the Study of the Presidency (CSP) in Washington, D.C., and a clinical professor of Georgetown University School of Medicine.

Yi-An Ko, a recent graduate of Harvard University, was a Health Policy Fellow at the CSP.