

Healthcare: Change the Debate Support a Real Public Option

Wednesday, 15 July 2009

Dear Friends,

In mid-May, in an effort to reach consensus, President Obama secured a deal with the health insurance companies to trim 1.5% of their costs each year for ten years saving a total of \$2 trillion dollars, which would be reprogrammed into healthcare. Just two days after the announcement at the White House the insurance companies reneged on the deal which was designed to protect and increase their revenue at least 35%

The insurance companies reneged on the deal because they refuse any restraint on increasing premiums, copays and deductibles - core to their profits. No wonder a recent USA Today poll found that only four percent of Americans trust insurance companies. This is within the margin of error, which means it is possible that NO ONE TRUSTS insurance companies.

Then why does Congress trust the insurance companies? Yesterday HR 3200 "America's Affordable Health Choices Act," a 1000 page bill was delivered to members. The title of the bill raises a question: "Affordable" for whom?.

Of \$2.4 trillion spent annually for health care in America, fully \$800 billion goes for the activities of the for-profit insurer-based system. This means one of every three health care dollars is siphoned off for corporate profits, stock options, executive salaries, advertising, marketing and the cost of paper work, (which can be anywhere between 15 - 35% in the private sector as compared to Medicare, the single payer plan which has only 3% administrative costs).

50 million Americans are uninsured and another 50 million are under insured while for-profit insurance companies divert precious health care dollars to non-health care purposes. Eliminate the for-profit health care system and its extraordinary overhead, put the money into healthcare and everyone will be covered, everyone will be able to afford health care.

Today three committees will begin marking up and amending HR3200. In this, one of the most momentous public policy debates in the past 70 years, single payer, the only viable "public option," the one that makes sound business sense, controls costs and covers everyone was taken off the table.

In contrast to HR3200 ... HR676 calls for a universal single-payer health care system in the United States, Medicare for All. It has over 85 co-sponsors in Congress with the support of millions of Americans and countless physicians and nurses. How does HR-676 control costs and cover everyone? It cuts out the for-profit middle men and delivers care directly to consumers and Medicare acts as the single payer of bills. It also recognizes that under the current system for-profit insurance companies make money NOT providing health care.

This week is the time to break the hold which the insurance companies have on our political process. Tell Congress to stand up to the insurance companies. Ask members to sign on to the only real public option, HR 676, a single-payer healthcare system.

Hundreds of local labor unions, thousands of physicians and millions of Americans are standing behind us. With a draft of HR3200 now circulating, It is up to each and every one of us to organize and rally for the cause of single-payer healthcare. Change the debate. Now is the time.

The time to act is now!

Sincerely Yours,

Dennis

PS - Over the next several months, I will be engaging all of you with frequent updates and will ask you to continue a movement to fight for what needs to be done now; ending this war in Iraq and stopping the escalation in Afghanistan, attaining true single-payer healthcare for all Americans, standing up for my brothers and sisters of organized labor.

After you have contacted your member of Congress, please tell us your thoughts and ideas on how you are organizing your friends and neighbors towards a single-payer movement and all of the other issues that are important to us.

Contact us at feedback@kucinich.us