

## **NH COMMENTARY: It's Not About Patients. It's Not About Protection. It's Not About Affordability**

P-PACA the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act— the so-called health finance “reform” legislation passed in March of this year has nothing to do with its title. Many requirements which could be used to help patients and make health care more affordable are written with reversible provisions ~after~ the next presidential election; provisions which will negate true reform.

Additionally, the provisions which could have had even *marginal* benefit will not be enacted until 2014 thus giving the insurance industry ample time to raise the cost bar by 25-60% on today's premiums so that when P-PACA goes live, they will have already built a high cost platform with guaranteed profits for the foreseeable future. And we pay. All of us: patients, physicians, nurses, clinics, and hospitals.

This “reform” takes from all of us far more than it gives back, especially by granting profit-based insurance companies *years* to price gouge before the law's provisions take effect. I cannot conceive of this as reform.

In reading the legislation itself, as well as summaries of the legislation, I cannot help but think of the phrase “shell-game.” Except that *P-PACA* is a shell-game so huge it takes my breath away the more I read. The only financial parallels I know of to this theft-masked-as-reform, are the details behind Enron's collapse, and more recently our bailout of the wealthiest institutions on earth—Wall Street investment houses.

Unfortunately we have just enacted a law which will allow, indeed promote, a massive transfer of public wealth to yet another group of private corporations at the expense of all citizens, businesses, and our economic stability.

In June 2010, Dr. Oliver Fein, president of the 17,000 member Physicians for a National Health Program toured NH giving presentations to educate and inform citizens, businesses, doctors, nurses, and students about the true cost of P-PACA and the reality of a *solution* to this shell-game: H.R. 676 Health Care for All.

H.R. 676 is legislation proposed in the U.S. House of Representatives and fully meets the criteria for actual Reform. It's about public funding of *private* health care delivery. For doctors and their patients, the relationship and freedom of choice is preserved. It's about taking out the non value-add player in our health delivery system in the U.S, the profit-based insurance corporations. We do not need them as middle-men. They serve no value. They are a black-hole down which our hard earned wages fall. And if you are afraid of big-government, you should be far more afraid of big corporations and their power over who gets what for health care in the United States.

H.R. 676 is not about socialism. Fear not as H.R. 676, Health Care for All, preserves to the fullest our choice and freedom to connect with the physicians and hospitals we personally value—and it does this at a cost far less than what we now pay to insurance middle-men. In the U.S. we have the means and the health care infrastructure to bypass older models of health care delivery, such as those used in Europe, and we have the intellectual capital to do this even better. We have the means to lead in this arena.

I would like to hear from one business person, whether profit, non-profit, in or out of the health care industry who can tell me they feel their businesses will be stronger when P-PACA law is enacted.

For those who are not sure a simple question will help when looking at our so-called health finance reform legislation: who actually benefits and who actually pays?

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