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Fix the system with legislation

NOVEMBER 9, 2009

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As president-elect of the New Jersey Association of Health Underwriters, I was eager to learn what the cost of the proposed health care reform package would be. More importantly, I wanted to make sure that any taxpayer dollar invested in this endeavor would be directed toward the greatest good.

I was stunned to learn that the proposed bill released from the Senate Finance Committee would cost \$829 billion, but would just minimally increase the number of insured Americans.

Look at the numbers: It is widely reported that there are 45.7 million uninsured people living in America. About 10 million are here illegally and avail themselves of our health care system at no charge.

Another 11 million of the uninsured already qualify for health insurance through the government, but haven't signed up. That leaves 24.7 million Americans truly uninsured — 8 percent of the population.

Also, please note that 10 million of the uninsured earn \$75,000 or more annually, but have chosen not to insure themselves.

So, in seeking "universal" health care, we are clearly not on the right track. Rather than spend \$829 billion for the sake of doing something, our lawmakers need to rethink how to insure the uninsured, while improving the health care system for all Americans.

Desmond X. Slattery

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