



By Letters to the Editor/The Star-Ledger

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Cost of health care

As a member 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 important, 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 would cost \$829 billion, but would just minimally increase the number of insured Americans.

Look at the numbers: It is widely reported 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 qualify for free health insurance through the government, but haven't signed up. That leaves 24.7 million Americans truly uninsured — 8 percent of the population. Also, 10 million of the uninsured earn \$75,000 or more annually, but have chosen not to insure themselves.

Rather than spend \$829 billion for the sake of doing something, our lawmakers need to rethink about how to insure the uninsured, while improving the health system for all Americans.

Real reform means that insurance companies can not turn anyone down and should cover those with pre-existing conditions. Meanwhile, regulating drug costs and enacting tort reform must also be included.

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