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November 25, 2009

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### Focus on current health programs, not new ones

Health industry experts say there are 11 million U.S. citizens who are eligible for Medicaid or SCHIP, but are not enrolled.

It begs the question: Why is Congress crafting plans to spend billions of taxpayer dollars to design new government programs when people aren't enrolled in the ones they've already created?

As the past president of the New Jersey Association of Health Underwriters, I urge Congress to find ways to sign up low-income citizens in existing programs before we design a new layer of government bureaucracy at great expense.

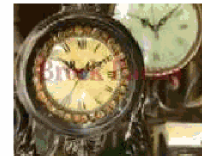
Once we've maximized the potential of the current programs, then we can identify the gaps, focusing on cutting health care costs through a combination of tort reform, creation of electronic medical records and preventative care, among other cost-effective solutions.

The House bill, recently passed by a razor-thin margin in the wee hours of the morning, does little to control costs, and the much-ballyhooed "public plan" is now expected to charge higher premiums than compatible private plans. The Affordable Health Care for America Act merely shifts around the numbers and does precious little to make health care more affordable.



Let's build on the health care system we already have, before creating even more burdens for taxpayers.

Rick Wheeler *Point Pleasant*



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