



Letter to the Editor  
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Suggested Headline: Health Plans Support Reform, Express Concerns

The United States Senate seems headed for a vote on a nearly \$1 trillion health care overhaul. We all recognize the need to change the current system of delivering and financing health care – in order to ensure quality and to make coverage more affordable. The problem is that there is no evidence that the current proposals in Congress will make those needed improvements for Louisianians. In fact, studies by respected organizations have shown that current Congressional proposals would result in the people of our state paying significantly more for their health coverage.

The Senate proposal would create an expensive new bureaucracy, levy more taxes on the backs of working citizens, and make cuts to Medicare that would mean higher costs borne by our state's seniors. If the current proposals are signed into law, health care costs will rise at an even faster rate. This simply is not the kind of solution Louisiana can afford.

Louisiana's health plans support health reform and have pledged changes to their business model to make health care more affordable and accessible for everyone. Some time ago we committed to Congress that we would help adopt pro-consumer rules and sweeping protections that would remove restrictions on preexisting conditions, end the practice of basing premiums on health status or gender, and help achieve universal coverage. Health plans cannot support, however, proposed changes that would harm individuals and families already enrolled, and small businesses that have acted responsively in offering coverage to their employees.

It appears that Louisiana Senators Mary Landrieu and David Vitter will soon have the opportunity to vote on whether: 1) to approve health care changes some political leaders consider their legacy, but that the majority of citizens of our state do not want and cannot afford; or 2) to ask their Congressional colleagues to take the time to develop true health care reform that addresses affordability and quality. The choice each one makes will speak loudly here at home.

Our country and state need health care reform that will make health insurance more affordable and that will expand access to the uninsured. Unfortunately, Congress' current version of health reform fails to get the job done. Let's take a step back and consider health care reform that will work.

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