

To the Ohio delegation of the United States Congress:

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,

January 20, 2010

It is with regret that Ohio Single Payer Action Network (SPAN Ohio) is forced to take a position of non-support of the current health care legislation. Although our preferred method of reform was not ever considered, we had hoped some good would come of the discussions centered on President Obama's number one domestic priority. Our objections to the legislation are completely non-partisan and bear no relation to the political opposition that has taken place to this point.

From the outset of this reform effort the President set forth three basic principles that he stated must be upheld: **Reduce Costs, Guarantee Choice and Ensure all Americans have quality, affordable health care.**

Unfortunately the U. S. Congress has failed to meet any of these basic requirements.

**Reduced costs will never be realized** under the current legislation. Individual mandates to purchase an insurance product will guarantee millions of new customers to a consolidated private insurance industry and subsidies to those unable to afford coverage will explode government spending. Furthermore, the continuation of the insurance industry anti-trust protection will allow one or two insurance companies to monopolize any market. In addition, with no threat of customers leaving to take advantage of a public plan option, or community rated plan, costs will continue to "skyrocket" as has been the experienced in Massachusetts, the state plan upon which federal legislation is modeled.

**Guaranteed choice is not achieved** either for employers or individuals. Individuals were assured, "if you like your plan you can keep it". However, if your employer provided plan is inadequate, you are locked into it with no choice for change. For the uninsured the private for-profit insurance market is their only "choice". For employers the double digit increase year after year is inescapable without addressing the monopolistic nature of private insurance providers. Furthermore, the employers' only choice is how much to reduce coverage or shift cost to employees, in order to maintain competitiveness.

**By any measure all Americans will not have quality, affordable health care.** Current estimates are that between fifteen and twenty million Americans will be left without access to health care even if this legislation is enacted. In addition, the excise taxes that are to be levied on current benefit plans will result in reduced plan benefits as employers seek to avoid tax liability. This tactic and the fact that these taxes are not indexed to inflation will leave more Americans at risk of medical bankruptcy (already the leading cause of personal bankruptcy).

We respectfully request that, as representatives of the citizens of Ohio, you withhold support of this health care legislation in favor of making Medicare available to more of the uninsured, the number being determined by budgetary constraints; the bureaucracy for this is already in place. Also, it is very important that the provision for facilitating ERISA waivers be added so that we and other states can enact better plans.

Mail In response:

Kurt Bateman, Director SPAN Ohio, PO BOX 91050, Columbus, OH 43209