

Health Care Reform - THE NEW YORK TIMES

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We can provide medical care for the uninsured by reviving the public health hospital system we have had in the past, and if needed, even incorporating our existing veterans administration hospital and military hospital facilities for hospital care; and reforming and expanding our public health clinics in the counties, towns and cities, for outpatient care. This public medical care system run by the government can link physicians and hospitals and improve efficiency and delivery of the health care, using health information technology. There are high hopes that the use of information technology will solve many current problems in health care while simultaneously reducing costs, which may not turn out to be the case.

Health reform legislation should make insurance coverage affordable by building upon and improving our current system but it should be mandated to be easily portable and offered without excluding or discriminating against those with pre-existing conditions, preserving the freedom of choice for patients and providers.

This new public health system and the improved existing private insurance-run system will address the coverage problem for the uninsured, without sacrificing the benefits of the existing current system for the majority of the already insured population. Even if some critics would argue against it, being a two-tier health care system, it would be better than a "half-tier" system which we will end up with later for everybody, otherwise.

Practice of defensive medicine is a major contributor to the present health care costs due to the present medical malpractice laws encouraging the "jackpot justice" system. It is appalling that the current health care reform talks do not address the medical liability issue in any significant way. This will have an impact not only on the cost but also on the care of our high risk patients, not being able to receive quality care on time. We have already witnessed the abandonment of obstetrical practice by many doctors and closing of the obstetric care units in many hospitals around the country.

We need to remain on guard and vigilant for the unintended adverse consequences of any newly implemented reform in health care. Health of the patients and the economy is too important to be subjected to political ideologies. The cure should not be worse than the disease for our present health care crisis!

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