

Health-care industry doesn't want change

Frustration and anger. Those are my feelings every time I see one of the health-care industry's misleading ads on TV, every time I see a Democrat dragging his or her feet on health-care reform, every time I see a working-class American parroting the lies and distortions embedded in Republican talking points on health care — talking points formulated in the boardrooms of insurance companies.

Where are the Howard Beales? Why aren't the poor and middle class of this country, who are being progressively crushed under the weight of insurance costs, yelling at the top of their voices: "We're as mad as hell and we aren't going to take it anymore"?

The cost of health care poses the biggest economic and social challenge we face, and yet almost every Republican and a host of so-called Democrats — like Sen. Max Baucus and the cynical band of Blue Dog Democrats — are determined to scuttle any meaningful reform of the system.

They are determined that there be no true public alternative to private insurance, one that would enable every American to afford health coverage.

Why? Because a public option would require the insurance/HMO/pharmaceutical cabal to actually compete in the marketplace, and that cabal doesn't want to compete. They like the way things are: record profits for their shareholders built on the backs of individuals and small businesses that must devote ever-increasing percentages of their incomes for health coverage.

This same group, not surprisingly, pumps hundreds of millions of dollars into the campaign coffers of members of Congress (take a look at Baucus' campaign-finance report), and spends additional billions in lobbying fees and television propaganda. Who do you suppose Baucus and the Blue Dogs listen to on the subject of health-care reform?

We need to end our disgrace and join the rest of the industrialized world in providing health care for all our citizens. Baucus and Aetna will have to be dragged, kicking and screaming, to that table, but we must make it happen. Accepting the status quo is a prescription for economic suicide.

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