



Save lives, help economy

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The Oct. 11 Times Union carried a host of articles on health care reform. Two made specific reference to the impact of health insurance costs on employers ("Health care costs stymie hiring" and "The shape of change").

If you question the need for health care reform, consider this real-life example in the Capital Region:

A local health care center received notification from its health insurer that may jeopardize the center's ability to continue to serve thousands of patients and provide employee health insurance.

In 2010, the insurer will impose a double-digit premium increase on employee coverage and reduce by 20 percent the amount it reimburses the center for patient services.

A system in which insurers increase their income from members while reducing payments to health care providers is broken; we're getting hit on both sides.

In many cases, the market prohibits negotiation on premiums and reimbursements, and promotes instability for employers. Looking to the health insurance market for correction has proven futile. We need health care reform to address this unchecked market.

It is widely recognized that the current health care system hinders U.S. global competitiveness.

One of the Oct. 11 articles references the "jobless" economic recovery, making the point that rapidly rising health care costs keep employers from hiring.

The U.S. will not fully rebound until we correct our broken health insurance system. By passing comprehensive health insurance reform, Congress will save more than lives. It will save the backbone of this nation -- the U.S. economy.

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