

Friday, March 15, 2013

To: Chairman, House Insurance Committee

Re: SB163/HB2243 Hearing date 3-18-2013

I am a proponent of the above bills. As a family physician in Kansas, I have seen firsthand the struggles with insurance and medicine and insurance premiums have risen to unaffordable rates. This is in small part due to the higher cost of practicing medicine, but it is in much larger part due to the inability of insurance companies to operate in a free market without expensive regulations and mandates.

For whatever reason, health insurance is treated differently than other types of insurance that we maintain. Auto insurance and homeowner's insurance companies are able to add and subtract coverage depending on what the buyer wants or needs. If you own a home without a sump then it would be unnecessary to have insurance for its failure. If you are a single male, there is no need for maternity coverage. Mandate-lite policies will be much better suited to consumer demand and will dramatically increase the number of people who are able to afford them. In my opinion, this will decrease the uninsured population in Kansas.

I know of many physicians locally and nationally who are planning on shutting the doors to their clinics come January 1, 2014 due to the Affordable Care Act. Physicians are frustrated with trying to keep up with all of the regulations that come with billing insurance only to find that reimbursements fall to a level that forces their clinics to run in the red. More and more physicians are limiting patients with certain kinds of insurance or jumping ship altogether and going to an insurance-free model.

High-deductible, catastrophic coverage insurance makes the most sense for individuals who are otherwise healthy. These people also represent the vast majority of the population. The downside to this type of insurance has been that patient's are stuck paying full price for things until they hit their deductible. When you couple this insurance with an insurance-free, prevention based, medical practice, some amazing things can happen. We've been proving it in my clinic for over 2 years.

As a physician I am more affected by how insurance companies work than just about anyone else, including the people buying insurance. It is critical that Kansas take the necessary steps to remove the binders that limit free market solutions in healthcare. We won't begin to fix the insurance problem until we allow some true innovation based on what's best for the consumer.

Thank you for your time. I am more than happy to talk in more detail if there are any questions.

Douglas Nunamaker, M.D.
AtlasMD
316-260-6454
drdoug@atlas.md