

October 21, 2009

Dear Friend:

Thank you for contacting me to express your concerns about the U.S. health care system and the need for reform. I appreciate hearing your views on this important issue and I apologize for any delay in my response.

Reforming the health care system is one of the most critical tasks facing our nation. The rapidly rising cost of health care is placing an extraordinary burden on individuals, businesses, and the government. Families need health care but they are struggling to afford it, especially in these very tough economic times. There are also many Americans who lack any health care coverage at all. As a diabetic, I know personally the need for quality, affordable health care coverage and the importance of preventive health care, which both preserves the health of individuals and saves money in the long run. That is why I have made it a top priority since my election in 2004 to make our health care system work for the well-being of all Americans, not just for the profits of the health care industry.

It is clear that we need to reform health insurance. People with pre-existing conditions should be able to get affordable coverage and coverage must not be taken away from anyone just because they get sick. I support the creation of a public health insurance option, one that will enable competition and supplement choices for individuals and businesses. I also believe there must be improved standards for private health insurance coverage. In addition, I support eliminating the federal anti-trust exemption that health insurance companies now enjoy. The exemption shields these companies from federal investigations of price fixing, bid rigging, and market monopoly activities.

Beyond addressing problems with private health insurance, comprehensive reform requires that every part of the system be improved, including those services or treatments provided by drug companies, hospitals, non-hospital medical centers, doctors, and long-term care facilities. I believe this is the only way that we can accomplish the two key goals of reform -facilitating coverage for all Americans and reining in the skyrocketing cost of health care - without compromising quality of care and without ever adding a dime to the deficit as promised by President Obama.

In addition to working on comprehensive reform, this year I have authored a number of pieces of legislation that will reform our health care system and make it work better for all Americans. These include:

H.R. 2917: Eliminates the tax break that drug companies receive for advertising to consumers and promoting their drugs to doctors. This would save taxpayers over \$40 billion over ten years and help decrease the overuse of prescription drugs.

H.R. 3205: Eliminates the tax break that health insurance companies receive for advertising.

H.R. 2566: Requires hospitals to publicly disclose the prices they charge. Price and quality information would help drive down costs by increasing competition among all providers.

I also helped introduce H.R. 684 that would allow the government to negotiate for lower drug prices for Medicare recipients.

Again, thank you for sharing your thoughts on this important issue. Rest assured that I will continue to work for real health care reform. Please do not hesitate to contact me in the future regarding this or any other matter of concern. Additionally, I invite you to visit my website at [www.lipinski.house.gov](http://www.lipinski.house.gov) to learn more about my work at home and in Washington as well as to sign up for E-newsletters.

Sincerely,

DANIEL W. LIPINSKI  
Member of Congress