

Health Care for Everyone Benefits Every One of Us

By Senator Pete Campos

Today's society exists in a highly complex, stressful and uncertain environment. This combination of factors presents enormous challenges and makes it difficult to enjoy a life of quality. The key to handling these various tensions revolves around being healthy, maintaining a good attitude and treating our physical being with care and respect. If we do this, our coping skills, our will to succeed and our aspirations will inspire us in our quest to compete and achieve.

Our minds and physique are delicate and react with the slightest influence of emotion, illness, age or use of various substances. Regardless of our physical or mental condition, we require regular care. Routine checkups and treatment are not just for those who have a private health care plan or access to public health care, but are also for the homeless, destitute and terminally ill.

Those who have a health care plan or who rely on public health and use it regularly for proactive health care experience long-term health benefits and financial savings. Additionally, if we all have access to health care, then health care providers, hospitals and long-term care facilities are not overwhelmed with epidemics, overcrowding and increasing demand for emergency services. The goal for society is to be healthy, productive and seek a purpose for living. When the availability of health care is limited, many are left fragile, susceptible to costly long-term illness and with a diminished drive to reach their aspirations.

A healthy society operates with optimism, finds solutions to economic challenges, such as limited affordable housing, high unemployment and a possible recession, and is prepared to undertake and withstand uncontrollable and unfortunate life-changing occurrences. That is why health care coverage for everyone is important, and it is why I am supporting the governor's Health Solutions New Mexico Act during the 2008 legislative session. Regardless of age, gender or race, access to health care information and treatment will keep us motivated to practice good hygiene, eat nutritiously, rest and work side-by-side with each other.

The governor's proposal, while not perfect, stands the best chance of getting health care insurance to the 400,000 New Mexicans who do not have it. But we should — and will — carefully examine the other proposals that have been introduced for ways to improve the governor's proposal.

Some of the key factors needed in a health care reform plan include reasonable access to current verified health care information, regular physical and mental examinations, in-patient and outpatient treatment, surgical procedures and short- and long-term rehabilitation. If these components are easily accessed and widely used, the increase in cost to society of long-term health care will slow and the cost of providing health care for everyone will be within reach. For a revision of our current health care system to work, it is imperative that we have experienced and visionary oversight, a mix of private and public sector involvement and the assurance that no person will be turned down for treatment regardless of the person's stage of illness. It is important that we care for our children, elderly, those who cannot care for themselves and the working person who truly cannot afford to become ill.

We must act now to revamp our health care system. Although the initial cost may be high, the long-term effect will be a healthier society with more affordable health care. That translates into a good economy, a society that can address its needs and an attitude toward living that will be positive, curtail violence and allow us to live longer with a higher level of satisfaction.

It makes good sense to have a health care plan for everyone.