

RADIO COMMENTARY: Governor's Recent News Release on Health Care Reform Recommendations

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ANNOUNCER'S INTRO: Earlier this month, Governor Bill Richardson's office sent out a news release about the health coverage reform recommendations he had received from his Health Coverage for New Mexicans Committee – after Mathematica Policy Research released its cost study of different health coverage reform models.

Comments from Jane Blume, owner of Desert Sky Communications and a consultant to the Health Security for New Mexicans Campaign:

BLUME: The Health Security for New Mexicans Campaign has strong concerns about the Richardson Administration's recent news release. It leads us to believe that any of the health care reform models that Mathematica Policy Research studied would cost less than the current system. However, that is not what the study found.

According to Mathematica, only one reform model currently costs less than the current system: the Health Security Act.

The news release also quoted Lt. Gov. Denish as saying, "In the long run, making no change in the current health care system would be more costly than moving forward with some type of reform."

That statement was also inaccurate. Mathematica actually found that even after five years, only the Health Security Act costs less than the current system, and the other

reform models still cost more. By 2011, the Health Security Act has estimated savings of hundreds of millions of dollars - and every resident has health coverage.

The Health Security Act was developed over many years of consulting with thousands of people from all over the state. It costs the least and saves money because it covers most residents under one cooperative plan with comprehensive benefits, and shifts the role of the insurance companies to provide supplementary insurance, just as they did under Medicare. We ask...

1. Why are the Governor and Lt. Governor making inaccurate statements about the study results?
2. After spending over \$300,000 of taxpayers' money on the study, why are the Governor, Lt. Gov., and their Health Coverage for New Mexicans Committee, ignoring both the unambiguous findings and the strong public support for the Health Security Act – endorsed by 128 organizations and 25 New Mexico counties and municipalities?
3. Why does the Governor say that the private insurance system is broken only for the uninsured?
4. Why do the Governor and his Committee ignore the evidence - piling up day after day - that the private health insurance system is completely broken?

The Governor has stated that he wants the private insurance industry to maintain its dominant role in health coverage.

The Health Coverage Committee's policy recommendations to the Governor, which mirror the original suggestions he sent them, will not solve the serious issue of rising health care costs or simplify an extraordinarily complex system, and will bind us to this failing system for years.

With the clear results of the study now before us, we can choose one of two very different paths.

We can continue trying to fix the failed private insurance system with ever-increasing amounts of taxpayer dollars, or we can go in a new direction. The Health Security Act enables New Mexicans – not the insurance companies - to develop a realistic, cost-effective and comprehensive solution to our health care crisis.

The path we take will have a serious impact on all of us. We are the ones who should make that choice, and communicate our views to the Governor and our legislators.

ANNOUNCER'S OUTRO: Jane Blume is the owner of Desert Sky Communications and the media relations consultant to the Health Security for New Mexicans Campaign: