

## Massachusetts Health Insurance Law 'Can't Work,' Op-Ed Says

*by Medical-News-Today*

The 2006 Massachusetts health insurance law, which took effect on July 1 and requires all state residents to obtain coverage, "isn't working and can't work" because "it costs too much and delivers too little," Steffie Woolhandler and David Himmelstein, physicians at Cambridge Hospital who co-founded Physicians for a National Health Program, write in a Boston Globe opinion piece. According to the authors, although Massachusetts officials maintain that almost half of previously uninsured state residents obtained health insurance by July 1, the "claims that health reform is succeeding are based on cooked books." Recent Census Bureau data indicate that the "new sign-ups amount to less than one-quarter of the uninsured," and "it's likely that much of that gain has already been wiped out by shrinking job-based coverage," the authors write. The authors attribute the failure of the law in part to the "scant help offered to the struggling middle class" to purchase health insurance and to the lack of affordable coverage available to uninsured Massachusetts residents. Meanwhile, the law has "buoyed our state's wealthiest health institutions" -- for-profit hospitals and health insurers -- and will "drastically cut funding for the hundreds of thousands who remain uninsured and for the safety-net hospitals and clinics that care for them," according to the authors (Woolhandler/Himmelstein, Boston Globe, 9/17).

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