

Nurses Blast "Cruel Ruse" By Insurance Giants To Cover Patients As Deal For Forcing Americans To Buy

by Medical-News-Today

The nation's largest organization of registered nurses today condemned the conditional offer by the insurance industry to stop denying coverage to sick people in exchange for a massive government bailout. On Tuesday, the insurance trade lobby America's Health Insurance Plans and Blue Cross and Blue Shield offered to stop denying coverage to those with pre-existing conditions - but only if the healthcare reform plan under consideration in Congress contains a requirement forcing all Americans to buy private insurance - and if Congress rejects a proposal to include a public plan alternative for people not wanting private insurance. "That's not a sign of flexibility at all, it's blackmail," said Geri Jenkins, RN, co-president of the 85,000-member California Nurses Association/National Nurses Organizing Committee. "They are only willing to scale back on their immoral denial of coverage for people who are sick, even those who have had minor illnesses, if they are given billions of dollars in payments from private individuals and government subsidies," said Jenkins. The insurer's proposal "amply demonstrates what is so fundamentally wrong with our insurance-based system. Decisions on whether patients can receive healthcare coverage are not based on patient need, but on how much profit the private insurers can make." Nurses, said Jenkins, were also disturbed at the response of lawmakers and others who praised the proposal. "In a more rational public debate on healthcare reform, we would be making it clear that all Americans should be guaranteed coverage and full access to needed medical care regardless of prior illness or ability to pay. Instead we are treated to a charade of policy makers continuing to seek proposals that protect the insurers' business priorities, rather than on what is best for the tens of millions of Americans enduring a collapsing and broken healthcare system," Jenkins said. "Only one reform will achieve that goal and end our national healthcare emergency, a single-payer system, such as expanding and improving Medicare to cover everyone," said Jenkins, as proposed in HR 676, a national bill by Rep. John Conyers. Source: California Nurses Association

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