

Submitted on Thursday, December 13, 2018

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Affiliation, if applicable: Concerned Vermonter
Town: Shoreham
Topic: ACOs

Comment:

Dear Chairman Mullen and Green Mountain Care Board members:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on OneCare Vermont FY19 ACO budget. The proposed \$903 million budget gives me great concern. During the past campaign season, I ran for Addison-Rutland House Representative. Access to healthcare was the top priority issue that came up repeatedly.

For the hundreds of folks that I spoke to, they simply cannot afford to purchase health insurance or if they have it, they cannot afford to use it due to the high deductibles and co-pays. Due to our rural and remote district, many of residents that I spoke to either have their own business or work for a small company that doesn't offer healthcare insurance.

Vermonters in my district are very worried. Very few expressed that they are covered by an affordable plan.

And for an individual I spoke to that was thankfully covered by good Medicare coverage, he was very upset the absorbent price that was assigned to a 15 minute urgent care doctors visit earlier this year. He had a deer tick attached to his body so being concerned drove himself to the urgent care facility (not the ER) at Porter Hospital. The claim submitted to Medicare was for \$1,918! It billed for 2 visits, which was not accurate. Medicare paid \$0 and his co-insurance paid \$361.82. Even \$361 is far to much to pay for having a tick removed and receiving 2 antibiotic pills. And what would he have been charged if he didn't have any insurance coverage? I heard other stories where individuals went to urgent care and ended up paying thousands of dollars due to their high deductible. The sad thing is, they weren't told upfront what the charge would be.

Yes, I agree that we need reform and that we need to reduce the cost of care, however ACO must be held accountable to transparency. Otherwise, I fear that in the end we'll just end up having to pay for even more administrative costs with little to show in terms of any savings. And, worse yet, the "improved healthcare outcomes" are only for a segment of our population. ACO has done nothing to tackle elephant in the room, which is access to affordable healthcare in Vermont.

I believe that the \$900 million dollar price tag would better be spent implementing Universal Primary Care in Vermont. It would actually provide benefits for all Vermonters and would have far better outcomes by treating medical issues before they become catastrophic problems.

As part of my campaign, I handed out an issues questionnaire that enabled voters to voice their concerns. Over 78% of the respondents agreed that Vermont should provide Universal Primary Care and of those 95% responded that it was a top priority. So much so, that almost 25% of the hundreds of households that I visited took the time to fill out the questionnaire and mail it back to me. They

understand that by making primary care a public good it would enable them to seek primary care when medical issues arise and potentially head off more serious and costly complications down the road. Though I didn't win the election this time, it was my willingness to take a stand on issues such as healthcare that enabled me, as someone new to Vermont, to receive 42% of the vote in a rural district where no one has even tried to run as a democratic candidate in several decades.

On behalf of all the Vermonter's that I've spoken to over the past 6 months, I urge you to reject this proposed budget and to focus on making healthcare affordable for all Vermonters, starting with Universal Primary Care.