

From: LaJeunesse, Kristen<Kristen.Lajeunesse@vermont.gov>
Sent on: Monday, March 18, 2024 5:15:12 PM
To: LaJeunesse, Kristen<Kristen.Lajeunesse@vermont.gov>
Subject: Public Comment: All-Payer Model/AHEAD

A public comment has been received.

Name: Ellen Schwartz

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Topic:All-Payer Model/AHEAD

Comment: I am writing to urge you not to move forward with the AHEAD model. Vermont has already spent lots of money on the ACO model, which has failed to make healthcare more affordable and accessible to the people of Vermont. The CMS seems to be enamored of value-based payment, but there is no evidence that it actually improves either access to care or quality of care. It is based on the flawed assumption that US healthcare costs so much because fee-for-service induces doctors to order unnecessary services, so the solution offered is to shift risk to providers. This idea has been around for about 20 years, building on its predecessor, the Health Maintenance Organization. If the diagnosis were correct, we would be seeing reduced costs and increased access to primary care in the many ACO programs that CMS has implemented. That has not been the case. Fee-for-service is not the cause of unaffordable healthcare. It is the market-based system we have, which forces even non-profit hospitals and insurers to operate as businesses, with an eye to maximizing financial gain whether or not it is called profit. If Vermont invests time and money in another project based on these flawed assumptions, there is no reason to anticipate that the result will be different than it has been for the 20 years of value-based experiments. Ultimately, the system that can control costs and increase access is a universal public system, which is what Act 48 promised to Vermonters. Every band-aid "solution" wastes more time and money and adds to the complexity of an already Byzantine system, while the problems faced by the uninsured and underinsured grow worse by the day. To the thousands of people who have been kicked off of Medicaid this year, and the thousands more who don't use their insurance because of high out-of-pocket costs, the thought that Vermont would embark on another value-based project is cold comfort.

Post Comment: Yes