

The Leader-Herald

Letters to the Editor

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Don't raise taxes on health-care sector

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Gov. Paterson has released an executive budget piled high with health-care taxes, including a doubling of taxes on inpatient and home care. There are also proposed tax hikes for nursing homes, as well as an expanded surcharge on physician's services.

These proposed increases in 2010-11 health-care assessments would be added on top of the 2008-09 health-care assessments just enacted less than a year ago, and would hit New Yorkers at a crucial time, when national health-care reform carries the promise of new health care and insurance taxes nationally.

Medical providers would have no choice but to build the taxes into the cost of their services and pass them on. Inevitably, increases in medical costs will result in increased insurance rates, meaning fewer individuals in our state can afford the premiums.

As a member of the New York State Association of Health Underwriters, I am on the front lines of this health-care crisis. I bear witness every day to how increases in health-insurance rates affect people and families. I recognize that our state is in a financial quandary, but increasing taxes on the health-care sector will just exacerbate the problem, further creating more uninsured New Yorkers.

If further taxes like these are added to the health-care sector in 2010, New Yorkers will be looking at a perfect storm of rate increases, causing employers to drop insurance coverage for their employees or to lay off workers.

As more people are dropped from the rolls of the insured, this health-care tax revenue would decrease, prompting a trend of higher taxes collected from fewer premium payers statewide. No one would win.

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