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Payment cut would worsen health-care ills

BY DR. J. MICHAEL MOSES

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— Recently, an article in USA Today suggested further reducing reimbursement to physicians and hospitals to curb the increasing costs of providing health care in America. During the past decade, reimbursement for services has never matched cost-of-living and wage index levels. Further reduction in compensation would serve to deepen the crisis that now exists in health-care delivery.

In a recent survey of 12,000 physicians by the Physicians Foundation, 76 percent of respondents said a shortage of primary-care physicians already exists, and 50 percent said they would reduce services or stop practicing altogether in the next three years.

Why? Eighty-two percent of physicians said their practice would be unsustainable with further cuts in reimbursement and increasing costs of malpractice insurance.

Sixty percent said they would not recommend medicine as a career to young people.

State and federal legislators continue to ignore the escalating costs in health care associated with litigation and defensive medicine. Doctors continue to be prey for trial attorneys, forcing the cost of malpractice insurance to unaffordable heights.

Tort reform with caps on non-economic damages would save taxpayers \$210 billion a year, which is 10 percent of the total cost of health-care spending in this country.

Each year \$2.5 billion is spent on Medicaid for illegal aliens and \$90 billion on welfare and social services for aliens.

These figures are but a few that indicate wasteful governmental spending that impacts the cost of health-care delivery.

Further reduction in compensation to those who provide medical care would serve only to deepen the crisis of physicians retiring early or reducing high-risk services, and fewer medical school graduates entering the market.

As taxpayers, you need to wake up, do the math and challenge your elected officials before there are no physicians or hospitals left to provide care for you or your family.

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