

McCain's health care plan would drop 20 million people

By MIKE HALL

When John McCain's health care plan comes under scrutiny, his claims that it would solve the nation's health care crisis are easily stripped away.

Newsweek economics correspondent Jane Bryant Quinn writes that if McCain's health care plan was put into effect, it would drop 20 million people from employer coverage and throw them into the shark tank of the private insurance world, and "will raise your costs without changing the game."

Writing in *The Nation*, Rose Ann DeMoro, executive director of the California Nurses Association/National Nurses Organizing Committee, warns McCain's plan would turn the health care industry over to the same deregulated, "free market" philosophy that sank Wall Street.

The Wall Street Journal reports McCain's health care plan would cut Medicare and Medicaid by \$1.3 trillion.

In *Newsweek*, Quinn writes: "McCain's idea is pretty simple. Tax the value of employer-paid health insurance as part of your regular income (62 percent of the non-elderly are in these plans). In return, he'd give everyone a refundable tax credit."

McCain's health care plan, as Sen. Barack Obama pointed out: "... is a shell game. Sen. McCain gives you a tax credit with one hand, but raises your taxes with the other."

Those tax credits McCain says will let you buy health insurance on the private market fall far short of the cost to replace most workers' employer-provided coverage, especially older workers, who could face annual premium costs of \$12,000 or more, writes Quinn. She notes that estimates from the non-partisan Tax Policy Center predict 20 million will lose their employer coverage and be forced into the private market.

What do you get in the private market?

"It's a shock to move from group plans into the harsh world of individual insurance," Quinn writes. "You get 'choices.' But the policies cost more

and cover less than company plans do — especially for women, older people and those whose health is less than perfect.

"That is, if you can find coverage at all. In 2006, the Commonwealth Fund studied working-age adults hunting for individual policies. One-fifth were charged more or rejected for health reasons.

More than half found it hard or impossible to secure a policy they could afford."

For those who don't have health insurance today, they won't under the McCain plan. Quinn writes the tax credit might move about 1 million of the 46 million uninsured off the rolls, compared to 34 million under Obama's proposals.

"If you're uninsured, the tax credit helps you purchase coverage. The only hitch — a big one — is that you have to be able to afford the premiums up front. The tax credit comes later. The government will send it to the insurance company, which will apply it to your account."

Quinn says conservatives love the "magic of the marketplace," but De-

Moro provides some chilling examples of that magical marketplace McCain worships.

"[The] private insurance system that welcomes anyone who is sick or has a prior medical condition as if they were carrying anthrax.

"... People like Karen George of Woodbridge, Va., whose insurer recently denied her coverage for surgery to treat a disconnected jawbone and insufficient airway that her physician said was life-threatening.

Or Barbara Calder of Colorado Springs, who was unable to buy insurance to cover her disabling genetic disease and is moving to her native Belgium to get health care. Or Samuel McAdam of Thornton, Pa., whose insurer denied the oral medication he needed for his stage-four melanoma."

She points out the contradiction that while McCain and other free marketers who are "cheerleading" the \$700 billion taxpayer-paid Wall Street bailout, they attack any move to enact meaningful health care for all legislation as an assault on the marketplace.

"McCain's idea is pretty simple. Tax the value of employer-paid health insurance as part of your regular income ..."

DeMoro also warns that McCain's call to reduce regulations on the health care industry — echoing his decade's long crusade to deregulate the financial and banking industries — would "strip away public protections that consumers have won in many states, such as requirements that insurers cover such 'frills' as cancer screening, diabetic supplies and minimum maternity stays.

"...Reduced regulations and oversight failed spectacularly on Wall Street. They'll make the health care crisis worse, as well."

Recently, the Wall Street Journal reported the McCain campaign — after months of dodging questions about where McCain gets the money for his

health tax credits—admitted it was coming from some \$1.3 trillion in cuts to Medicare and Medicaid — the cornerstone health care programs for the nation's seniors, disabled and low-income families.

"The Republican presidential nominee has said little about the proposed cuts. ... The McCain campaign hasn't given a specific figure for the cuts, but didn't dispute that analysts' estimate."

In short: McCain's health care plan will raise taxes, reduce benefits, raise costs, bring a "free-market-Wall-Street" free-for-all to the health care industry and cut \$1.3 trillion in senior and low-income health care.


(Editor's Note: Mike Hall writes for the AFL-CIONowBlog News.)

RE-ELECT
OUR STATE REPRESENTATIVE
JIM MOELLER
49th Leg. Dist. - Position Two - DEMOCRAT

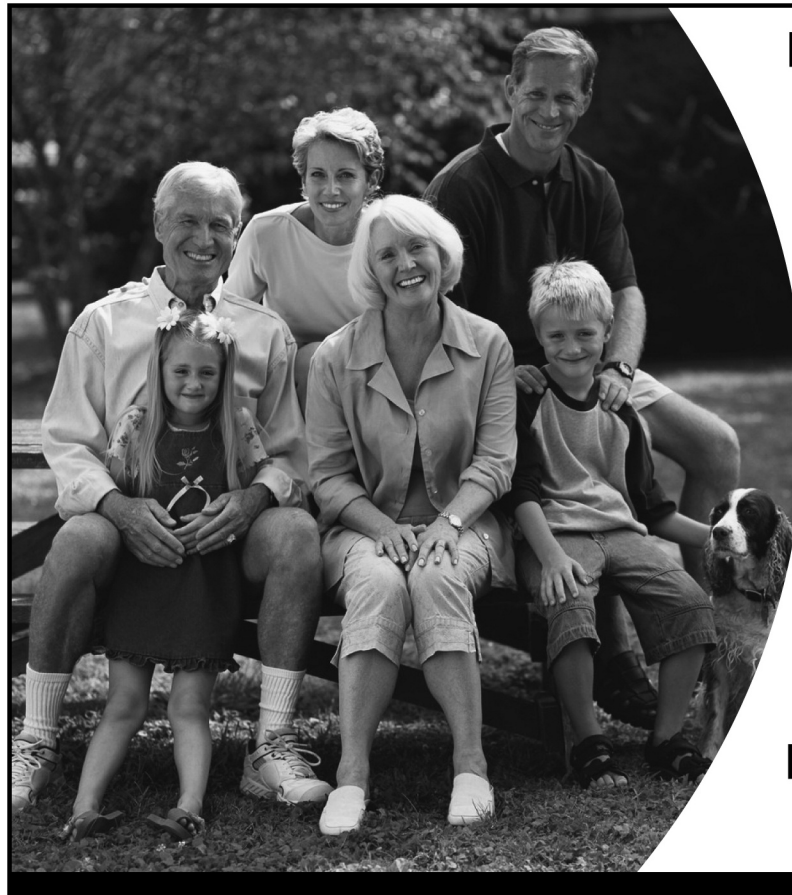
"If you're not PRO-Union - you're not PRO-America!"

**LEADERSHIP THAT WORKS
- FOR ALL OF US**

Proudly Paid for by The Committee to Elect JIM MOELLER
1701 Broadway, Suite 328, Vancouver, WA 98663 • (360) 904-3377 • jim@jimmoeller.org



Carpenters, Electricians, Laborers, Glaziers, Sheetmetal Workers, Floorcoverers, Bricklayers, Cement Masons, Roofers, Asbestos Workers, Millwrights, Painters, Elevators, Plasterers, Family



IBEW & United Workers Federal Credit Union



Proudly serving union members and their families since 1954.

WE ARE STRONG.

WE ARE SECURE.

**WE'RE READY FOR YOUR
BUSINESS INCLUDING LOANS.**



9955 SE Washington St.
Portland, OR 97216

(503) 253-8193 * (800) 356-6507
www.ibewuwfcu.com

Carpenters, Electricians, Laborers, Glaziers, Sheetmetal Workers, Floorcoverers, Bricklayers, Cement Masons, Roofers, Asbestos Workers, Millwrights, Painters, Elevators, Plasterers, Family



(International Standard Serial Number 0894-444X)
Established in 1900 at Portland, Oregon
as a voice of the labor movement.
4275 NE Halsey St., P.O. Box 13150,
Portland, Ore. 97213
Telephone: (503) 288-3311

Editor: Michael Gutwig
Staff: Don McIntosh, Cheri Rice

Published on a semi-monthly basis on the first and third Fridays of each month by the Oregon Labor Press Publishing Co. Inc., a non-profit corporation owned by 20 unions and councils including the Oregon AFL-CIO. Serving more than 120 union organizations in Oregon and SW Washington. Subscriptions \$13.75 per year for union members.

Group rates available to trade union organizations.

PERIODICALS POSTAGE PAID
AT PORTLAND, OREGON.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS NOTICE: Three weeks are required for a change of address. When ordering a change, please give your old and new addresses and the name and number of your local union.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to
NORTHWEST LABOR PRESS, P.O. BOX 13150,
PORTLAND, OR 97213-0150

