



advertisement

Monday, November 09, 2009 9:32:41 AM EST

New User? Register | Sign In



Home Online Edition Print Edition Events Marketplace Contact Us

Sign-up for eNews Alerts!

- News By Industry
- Supplements
- Submit News
- Quick Links

OPINION

Letters to the Editor

Nation not ready for public option

By

11/9/2009

[Print this page](#) | [E-mail to a friend](#) | [Submit news tips](#) | [Send a letter to the editor](#) | [SHARE](#)

We encourage readers to write letters concerning New Jersey business issues. Please keep letters to fewer than 400 words. We reserve the right to edit letters and reproduce them at njbiz.com. Please sign your name and include a telephone number. List your town, or if you prefer, your title and company's name. Send letters to editorial@njbiz.com.

Nation not ready for public option

A recent "60 Minutes" edition revealed that there is about \$60 billion in Medicare fraud each year, and government officials are throwing up their hands in despair.

The next morning, some members of Congress held press conferences not to decry Medicare fraud, but to urge support for a national program that would serve as a government-sponsored health insurance program for more than 100 million Americans.

As a member of the New Jersey Association of Health Underwriters, I found there to be a disconnect between Sunday night and Monday morning. I wonder if members of Congress are listening to what is happening in this country, or just want to ram through an ill-advised public option, whether it makes sense or not.

In the "60 Minutes" segment, the fraud department at Medicare admitted it is grossly short-staffed, buried underneath a behemoth system that processes more than a billion claims a year, equaling more than \$430 billion. "60 Minutes" also interviewed a scam artist for their story, who claims he was making up to \$40,000 a day issuing fictional Medicare claims.

The news segment made it crystal clear that the government can't handle fraud in its public health insurance program. Yet, the morning after the segment aired, members of Congress were back at the Capitol, guns blazing, fighting for the creation of the largest public health insurance program in history that would easily dwarf Medicare.

Unlike private insurance, which has to answer to many stakeholders, this new government health insurance program would have only one boss: Uncle Sam. The same government that has turned a blind eye to hooligans who have bilked \$60 billion in taxpayer money each year would be in charge of this new public option. The opportunities for fraud would be enormous.

Medicare was created for a good reason: to help America's elderly and disabled citizens. In time, it has become an ATM for criminals.

Before Congress considers a new layer of government, we must fix the system we already have. We must create an airtight system that ensures assistance goes to the elderly and people with disabilities — not criminals in the market for a newer yacht.

Brad Greenbaum, president

Alligro Benefits Service

Fairfield

Threat to banks and small business

In the aftermath of what appears to be the biggest financial catastrophe of this century, it has become commonplace to call for more regulation, more capital, less diversity and less risk. The implications of these calls will have far-reaching consequences that may not produce the results that were intended.

In trying to save the financial system, regulators have forced the mergers and acquisitions of "too big to fail" institutions, which have actually created even larger and more systemically important institutions. Expect membership in the trillion-dollar-plus balance sheets to rise even further, even though there is a cap on national deposits at 10 percent.

Regulation, meant to protect consumers, may actually cause higher fees, less options and the destruction of many smaller community banks that cannot function under the cost burden of all the additional regulation.

NEXT ▶

Search Archives Enter search terms here... go

MORE FROM NJBIZ

PEOPLE WHO READ THIS...

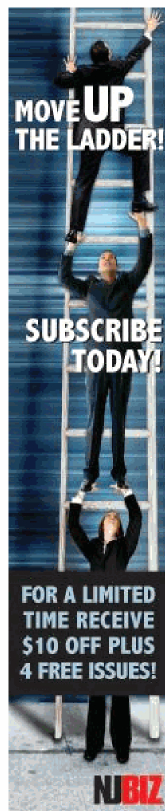
Also read these stories:

▶ This Week's Most Read Articles

- In hunt for major lease, state turns to Brick City**
17,229 views
- Roche aims at top researchers in hiring plan**
14,129 views
- Twitter enters the toolbox as professionals expand their networks**
13,275 views
- The morning after: Business reacts to Christie's victory**
12,836 views
- N.J. homebuilding surged in September**
12,294 views

▶ Most Recent Articles

- Report: U.S. jobless rate broke 10 percent in October**
11/6/2009
 - Transportation tops \$36.2B two-year construction spending forecast**
11/6/2009
 - Unemployment benefits legislation awaits Obama's signature**
11/6/2009
 - Ridgewood resident charged in \$20M insider trading case**
11/6/2009
 - TOP NATIONAL & INTERNATIONAL HEADLINES**
11/6/2009
- [MORE](#)



advertisement

Advertising

- Media Kit
- Print Ad Info
- Web Ad Info
- Event Sponsorships
- Production Info

Customer Service

- Register
- Contact Us
- Change of Address
- Print Subscriptions
- Print Renewals
- Free Trial
- Gift Subscriptions
- Help & FAQ