

Carmen Bracamonte's Point Of View **AN UNHEALTHLY DEBATE ON HEALTHCARE REFORM**



If you have been following the health care debate, you'd agree on the unhealthy process surrounding the debate, which turned into law this week.

Of course, everyone across the country wants all Americans to have insurance. Of course, we all want insurance companies to stop uncontrollable profits from premiums they charge the same way banks profited in the housing and credit card industries for years. And of course, we want children and adults to be covered despite medical conditions by any insurance company. All this is good. Who would deny it? Unfortunately, even when we hear that some of these policies go into effect immediately, by the time, government will support them -- administratively speaking -- may take long. Maybe longer than we all wish.

The healthcare bill the way it is right now-- tremendously far from what Senator [Obama](#) offered in his 2008 campaign-- reminds me of his famous quote: "**When I become President of the United States, I will signed a bill that provides Universal Insurance to all Americans that includes a public option.**" None of those promises included in today's bill are not surprise . . . after all, campaign politicians always say what's needed to get the votes.

And, if by any chance, you decide to look at the [fiscal](#) portion of this bill, you will easily see that this bill will eventually bankrupt the country for youngest generations, if not before, if unemployment continues to rise (we will simply not pay taxes and/or penalties as Obama's administration intends to fund the bill). As an American citizen, I was always proud of the democratic system we enjoy in this wonderful land of opportunity, but seeing the arm twisting, the multiple threats to congress men and women, and the many deals taking place close doors to secure votes in the House of Representatives — simply portraits a government that distant itself from the essential principles of this country's funding parents.

No matter what your position is on Healthcare reform, now that it is law; there's not point for debate anymore. So, all we can do for now it's "hope" that policy-makers improve the bill on behalf of all Americans. Until then, what are the options for millions of Americans who still struggle?

- If you are uninsured or have an inadequate plan, reach out to your town's [community health centers](#). They are federal funded and can assist with general and [preventive health](#) issues including vaccinations, dental work, ear infections, and even [diabetes](#) management. If you are unemployed, given your financial status, services are free or at least will charge you a modest fee based on your income.
- Every hospital's emergency room has a foundation. Again given your financial situation, they will consider your case and provide financial assistance.
- Federal money has also been dedicated to a number of FREE CLINICS across your state. If you contact your local county's health department, they will give you a list of free clinics available in your municipality.
- Are medications too expensive? Don't hesitate to work with your primary care physician and ask for free samples. Also, ask your doctor to replace brand medications by generic medications. If you have insurance, a 3-month mail ordering supply can mean significant savings.
- Most pharmaceutical companies have [Patient Assistance Programs](#) in place that are funded by their own foundations. Simply search for the company that manufactures your medication and learn about their program's eligibility process. Most likely, they will ask you to fill an application --generally in conjunction with your physician -- because they will need your doctor to issue a prescription. Given your financial status, your medication supply will last as long as you need it and as long as your doctor can validate it.
- Finally, don't hesitate to take advantage of the numerous discount programs available at pharmacies like [CVS](#), [Walgreens](#) and [Walmart](#). They have discount programs up to \$25. You just need to pay attention to their websites and stores' newsletters for updates.

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