

Healthcare

I support universal healthcare coverage. Successful individuals, stable families, thriving communities, and strong businesses all depend on accessible and affordable healthcare. Healthcare is a right, and more importantly, none of us want to watch our family members or neighbors suffer for lack of healthcare.

When healthcare providers step up and provide care for those without insurance, they cover the cost of that care by increasing the insurance cost burden to businesses. Particularly in the 7th Congressional District, this places our businesses at an unfair disadvantage compared to other parts of the state and nation.

We need to continue to strengthen the programs which have expanded healthcare coverage. Our care for veterans dates back to 1812 and now serves over 9 million veterans. The Indian Health Service was formed in 1955 and serves 2 million Native Americans. Medicare, Medicaid, and Community Health Centers were established in 1965. Combined, they serve over 130 million of our elders as well as impoverished and disabled Americans. The Children Health Insurance Program began in 1997 and provides coverage for 9 million children. The final addition to public healthcare programs came in 2010 and was the Affordable Care Act (ACA). Twenty five million Americans have coverage through the ACA.

In spite of these efforts to provide universal health care, there are still gaps and weaknesses. Premium costs and high deductibles continue to place economic stress on middle class Americans. Businesses continue to be burdened by the high cost of insuring their workforce. Pharmaceutical costs have skyrocketed. We need to work towards solutions for both the cost of coverage for individuals and businesses, as well as decreasing the costs of delivering the care.

The ACA included support for testing new models of delivering care, with a goal of maintaining quality while decreasing cost. Particularly in the 5% of the population on whom substantial misfortune has fallen, using care management methods can decrease the cost of care. Pharmaceutical costs need to be decreased by bringing generic medications to the market more efficiently. We also need to return competitiveness to the pharmaceutical market place and allow Medicare Part D to negotiate for the best price.

Another method for decreasing the cost of insurance for individuals and businesses is to move more patients into public insurance programs. This occurred for my patients with

end stage renal disease. Since 1972, these patients have been transitioned into Medicare, decreasing the pressure on private insurance to cover the highly effective and costly treatments of dialysis and transplantation.

I have extensive experience in healthcare as a kidney doctor. Beyond that, I have a medical business degree and have been the president of a major healthcare provider. I have a deep understanding of the challenges and complexities of providing care for all our families & neighbors. I am well positioned to be an insightful and effective voice at the table when healthcare policy is written.