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Letters to the Editor
Times Union
Albany, New York 12212

To the Editor:

Governor Cuomo this week announced his intention to enact an emergency regulation aimed at protecting New Yorkers' access to health care — a goal the health plan community agrees with wholeheartedly.

However, the approach articulated in the governor's press release simply touted government's intent to maintain benefits and policies — preserving essential health benefits and rules related to pre-existing conditions — that are already in place in New York. However, the threat to ban government business to plans that leave the state exchange will jeopardize access and choice for New Yorkers and injects new uneasiness to New York's marketplace during a time of already high uncertainty.

The New York Health Plan Association and its members feel strongly that the key to continuing a successful marketplace with robust health plan participation is not complicated: it is fair and actuarially sound premiums and stable oversight that does not upset settled expectations. We feel just as strongly that the answer is not a single-payer system, as suggested by the Times Union.

As we all know by now, health care is complicated. But our response should not be overly simplistic. In many ways, "Single-Payer" has become a slogan, much like "Repeal and Replace."

While states have shown a renewed interest in exploring single-payer initiatives, these proposals face long odds. The cost of implementing single-payer systems is extreme — the price tag for California's plan exceeds the entire state budget — and would be financed by significantly increased taxes, which polls consistently find is a hard pill for most consumers to swallow. Other states — Vermont and Colorado — have outright rejected single-payer.

We should all be working together to preserve the best parts of the ACA and to improve those that need fixing — not creating instability and discord, which the governor's proposal does, or by looking to replace it with a system that offers no guarantees it would improve access, outcomes or reduce costs.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul F. Macielak", is written over the typed name.

Paul F. Macielak
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