

Iowa State Association of Letter Carriers



President's Report

June 2009

Does anyone think that something doesn't need to be done about health care in this country? I recently received my "Personal Statement of Benefits" from the USPS. My health insurance premiums (USPS share and mine totaled) were over \$11,400.00. Add to that total, all of the out of pocket expenses one shells out for co-pays, lab work, and deductibles. Does anyone wonder why over 46 million Americans no longer have health insurance? Does anyone wonder why an estimated 42 percent of adult Americans have a policy that if they get really sick, will put them into bankruptcy? My brother manages a small business where they offer health care benefits to their employees. One person, or one family member, getting seriously ill, puts the entire business at risk of dropping insurance altogether or lowering benefits for all. The current system is putting at risk for business and individuals, our economic and personal health. Something has to be done.

I just read an article concerning CEO pay of some of the largest health care providers. While pay is down this past year, partly as "bonuses" are being replaced with stock options, a recent study of CEO compensation over a 5 year period showed that a total of 23 CEO's listed in Fortune magazine were paid 14.9 billion dollars. Now, to that total add another 300 companies paying their CEO's. To that add the salaries of Vice Presidents, Chief Financial Officers, Boards of Directors, etc.... Something has to be done.

For a lot of years, I kept hearing that the government was incapable of running a health insurance plan and that if it was turned over to the government, health care would be rationed. First of all, call your doctor's office and see if you can get in today. If you can, you probably need to get another doctor! It normally takes 2 to 3 weeks for me to get an appointment at best. Secondly, I'm now hearing that it's not fair for a private company to have to compete against the government (I don't think that UPS or Fed-Ex have done to badly). Something has to be done.

Universal health care, or "single payer", has been implemented in every single wealthy industrialized nation but one, the United States. Businesses in this country are at a huge disadvantage when competing with foreign companies, who have no health care costs. The NALC supports a single payer system and current legislation in the House; H.R. 676. I would

Iowa State Association of Letter Carriers



President's Report

urge you to contact both your Congressman and Senators Harkin and Grassley and let them know that health care reform is a must. If health care reform is not passed this year, it probably won't be taken up again for another four or more years. If that's the case, then brother Tim O'Malley should probably be asking us for a big raise! For further information, contact the NALC office of Legislative and Political Affairs at 202-662-2833.

Since last month's article, our Hawkeye District Manager, Doug Morrow has announced his retirement. When I first got the news late on a Friday evening, I sent a text message to many of the branch presidents across the state. My phone didn't stop ringing for over an hour. Responses varied from "Are you sure?" to "Dancing in the street here?" What I quickly discovered was that no branch presidents were sad to see him leave, and, that they all need to get a life to respond so quickly on a Friday night! As to his replacement, two candidates have been identified, see "www.iowalettercarriers.org", click on image gallery and scroll to 1-24.

Lastly, they're still at it. You'd think after years of doing the same thing, all around the state, that the idiots would learn. Guess not. Another Postmaster has decided that our customers need to move their mail receptacles to the street or face the curtailment of delivery to their homes. The Post Office writes most of the rules and regulations, including those that govern delivery. When a letter carrier violates the rules, he/she is immediately disciplined. But when a Postmaster violates the rules, it's looked upon as just an error in judgment because, after all, they were trying to make the numbers look better. As I've stated many times over the years, if you want to discipline a manager, he'd have to be a convicted serial killer!

Mike Birkett
President,
Iowa State Assoc. of Letter Carriers
www.iowalettercarriers.org