

October 31, 2008

Dr. Brian Davis  
Brian Davis for Congress  
P.O. Box 1081  
Rochester, MN 55903

Dear Dr. Davis:

We are writing to you today as doctors, nurses and residents of southern Minnesota who are concerned about your repeated calls to eliminate some of Minnesota's health insurance requirements in order to save money.

Specifically, we are troubled by reports in the Rochester Post-Bulletin that you would "work to reduce health care costs by introducing market competition in the insurance market and eliminating state regulations that mandate coverage for certain illnesses and conditions."

You repeated this position during a debate in Fairmont on October 2, 2008, when you responded to a question about health care by saying: "We need to have fewer state mandates so we can have a more uniform market across the country."

And in a debate on October 13, 2008, you said that laws like those in Minnesota that require health insurance companies to cover cancer screenings are problematic because "the more that a state does that, the more that they take away choice."

Dr. Davis, here is a partial list of treatments and services that health insurance companies in Minnesota are required to cover:

Alcoholism treatment, Ambulatory Surgery Centers, Anti-psychotic drugs, Bone marrow transplants, Breast reconstruction, Cervical cancer screening, Chemotherapy, Childhood immunizations, Cleft palate surgery, Clinical trials, Colorectal cancer Screening, Contraceptives, Dental anesthesia, Diabetes supplies and treatment, Drug abuse treatment, Emergency services, Hair prostheses for chemotherapy patients, Hearing aids, HPV vaccine, Lyme disease, Mammograms, Mastectomy, Maternity stays, Mental health care, Mental health parity, Off-label drug use, Ovarian cancer screenings, Infertility services, Treatment of phenylketonuria, Prostate screening, and Temporomandibular joint (TMJ) disorder treatment.

Additionally, health insurance companies are required to cover the services of many health care professionals, including:

Dentists, Dieticians, Licensed Health Professionals, Marriage therapists, Nurse Anesthetists, Nurse Midwives, Nurse Practitioners, Nurses, Occupational Therapists, Opticians, Optometrists, Pharmacists, Physical Therapists, Podiatrists, Public facilities, Psychiatric Nurses, Psychologists, Social Workers, and Speech Therapists.

Finally, Minnesota state law requires insurance companies to extend insurance coverage to the adopted children of insurance policy holders, as well as dependent students, handicapped dependents and newborns.

Dr. Davis, these laws, which set minimum standards of health care, are not an abstract part of health care policy. Requirements like these guarantee that Minnesotans will receive essential care and treatment for their health problems. For many Minnesotans who are desperately in need, these minimum standards of care ensure that they will not be held at the mercy of an insurance company when they are in need of health care.

That's why we are so troubled to hear that you believe that we should eliminate these requirements because they "take away choice." These requirements do not take away choice; they help ensure that many Minnesotans will continue to receive the health care and services they need.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Lew

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Mary Bliesner

Alberta Steppaw

Sen. Kathy Sheran

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