

Jerry Kilcourse

Dear Senate Health and Welfare Committee Members,

Please see a letter I wrote in support of H.207/S.88 that was recently published in the Times Argus and Rutland Herald.

Two new bills H.207 and S.88 are being submitted for consideration of the Vermont House and Senate that would cover all Vermonters for primary doctor visits starting in 2017. These bills have bipartisan support in the Senate and even tri-partisan support in the House and would go a long way in containing or even reducing our escalating health care costs.

Primary care is essential for quality health care as many small medical problems can be dealt with before they become bigger problems. Once they do become bigger and an emergency room visit or hospital stay is required the cost of care takes a quantum leap upward. When this happens everyone eventually pays through higher premiums and other out of pocket costs.

Obviously any additional tax no matter how small or how many it benefits will be controversial and a factor in gaining public support but it should be put in context. The cost of guaranteed primary health care for all Vermonters would be about \$160 million per year. This is less than that of the newly proposed University of Vermont Medical Center (formerly Fletcher Allen) building. Therefore any tax for primary care would be negligible compared to the billions we already pay for our health care in the current system and would be off set because patients would not be billed for such care.

Primary care is the foundation for a healthier society and lower overall costs, not impressive new medical center buildings. Unfortunately today, many are unable to access primary care including those with health insurance due deductibles and other out of pocket expenses.

Thank You,

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