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## Medicaid: A conservative's view



2:06 PM Sat, Mar 13, 2010 | Permalink | Yahoo! Buzz
Robert T. Garrett/Reporter Bio | E-mail | News tips

I asked a conservative Austin think tank, the Texas Public Policy Foundation, for its thoughts on a progressive group's warning Friday that potential 5 percent budget cuts in Medicaid -- which would cut provider payments -- could again crimp doctors' willingness to accept new Medicaid patients.

"I share the concern about inadequate reimbursement for our Medicaid physicians," said former Rep. Arlene Wohlgemuth, R-Burleson. She's now with the foundation, which advocates limited government and free market solutions.

"The federal government has given us almost no flexibility on our Medicaid costs," she said.

Wohlgemuth would like Washington to let states offer poor people vouchers, which they could use to buy private health insurance.

"We wouldn't have the problem of physicians' not accepting Medicaid patients because they would be in the same system that you and I are in," she said. Wohlgemuth also wants states to be allowed to use sliding scale fees, to give Medicaid recipients "skin in the game" -- and incentive to curtail costs.

"Medicaid is so complex ... that we can't design a system that is good for the people who are getting it and is cost effective for the state," she said. "That's not possible. So we have to cut the provider rate. Let's get a simpler system."

## Comments

Posted by Frank @ 4:13 PM Tue, Mar 16, 2010

Am I reading this right, the former Republican Congresswoman is advocating a simpler system, Like Single Payer that she had while in Congress. By all means. Please refresh us whether she gets to keep her congressional health plan after she left office.

Underfunding any program and then calling it a failure is the oldest trick in the book, especially while the same lobbyists are now in essence calling for more subsidizing private health care.

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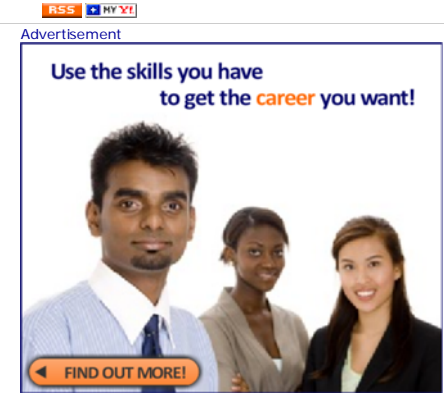
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