

Hearing before the Senate Public Health Committee
Rising Health Care Costs and the Health Care Reform
January 14, 2009

N/A

This testimony represents the opinion of a group of nurses with 400 years of collective nursing experience

- **Nurses should participate on health care reform planning committee**
 - Nurses have direct contact with health care consumers/your constituents and know their needs
 - Nurses focus on prevention and health promotion which is more cost effective than disease treatment
 - Nurses provide coordination of needed care and services to enhance treatment outcomes
 - Nurses are capable of extending the services of physicians, and of evaluating outcomes of treatment
 - People trust nurses <http://public-healthcare-issues.suite101.com/article.cfm/nurses-are-most-honest-and-ethical>

- **Professional nursing shortage is estimated to be one million by the year 2020**
 - Nurses are cost effective health care providers
 - Adequate professional nursing staff levels have demonstrated a decreased level of morbidity and mortality
Aiken LH, Clarke SP, Sloane DM, et al. Hospital nurse staffing and patient mortality, nurse burnout, and job dissatisfaction. JAMA Oct 23-30 2002;288(16):1987-93.
 - Prospective nursing students are being turned away from colleges and universities now because of the qualified nursing educator critical shortage
<http://media.www.sbstatesman.com/media/storage/paper955/news/2008/02/04/News/Nursing.Schools.Suffer.Educator.Shortage-3184113.shtml>

- **The uninsured drive up the health care costs for all of us**
 - Use of public funded programs such as CHIP to allow buy-in of healthy young adults and families with children above CHIP income levels but do not have access to health insurance through employment could provide huge cost savings

- Five million uninsured teens, nationally, are left out of federal-state programs designed to help children (CHIP covers up to age 19)
 - As an example, well designed system of care for teens would provide an opportunity to intervene in high cost, risk taking behaviors with immediate consequences, such as suicide, car accidents, experimentation with drugs and alcohol, teen pregnancy, and sexually transmitted disease
 - Administrative costs of public funded programs, such as CHIP, can be clearly defined and such things as CEO costs, as an example, could be controlled
 - Most importantly, a larger pool of insured means lower premiums and more covered services
- Care of the elderly population and populations with disabilities
 - Appropriate ~~nursing~~ home care is more cost effective than care in the hospital or a nursing home
 - High cost populations are another group needing further consideration for possible cost savings
 - For example, access to specialty care for children with special health care needs prevents added complications and poor outcomes
 - Provides primary care providers with assistance in managing the health care of this special population

I would like to thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony before this committee. Feel free to contact the following for further discussions.

BJ Archambault at: lcarch@mt.net