

CAHU-PAC's Strategic Mission

by Barry Fisher

I'm writing to you from 31,000 feet returning from NAHU's annual Capital Conference in Washington, D.C., reflecting on the many tactical victories both NAHU and CAHU's legislative programs have achieved over the past 12 years of my involvement with the organization. It is hard to fathom what health insurance would look like without the tireless efforts of volunteers and paid staffs that have labored against forces hostile to choice, quality care and the agent's role in a private system of health care delivery.

Closer inspection of our current status, however, leads me to increased concern. Like the proverbial frog put in a pot of cool water, only to be boiled slowly as the chef incrementally turns-up the heat, our free enterprise model of health care and insurance is being sliced, diced and slowly simmered into oblivion by poll-driven politicians and special interest groups who tinker away our freedoms by imposing failed recipes for health care reform. The question that I keep asking is how can we stop and reverse this trend? How can we make a strategic difference?

The current red herring being bated on the hook by those bent on a government takeover of health care is the issue of the uninsured. The number bandied about nationally is 44 million; in California, 6 million. However, as Phil Leberherz of LISI has pointed out, these numbers are vastly exaggerated and designed to mislead the public. The facts are that most Americans are eligible for some form of health insurance (either public or private) and that the true uninsured numbers are probably less than 20% of those being cited by the enemies of private

enterprise and parroted by the press. Thanks to Phil's efforts and CAHU's support, Californians now have access to the truth about health care access provided by the Health Care Options Matrix and Phil's non-profit Foundation For Health Coverage Education. Check out the Foundation's website www.coverageforall.com.

The good news is that thanks to a small, yet far-sighted group of members, CAHU-PAC has raised more money than ever before. We are on target to break the \$200,000 mark this fiscal year and are shooting for \$250,000 by June 30, 2004. These funds have been well spent and provide our volunteer and professional legislative advocates with

Until now, most of our initiatives have been tactical in nature. We react to a bill that is introduced and find ourselves seeking to turn a sow's ear into a silk purse. Our success with SB 2 is a case in point. While we were able to create a better piece of legislation by being at the negotiating table, stopping employer mandated health insurance wasn't an option. Our voices of experience helped craft a law that is based in market reality and protects our role in the delivery system. SB 2 was a tactical victory for CAHU and all health insurance agents in California. In my estimation, however, it was a strategic loss against those who think the answer to every social problem, real or perceived, is by taxing, directly or indi-

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the access that they need to influential legislators who directly impact your ability to earn a living. We are now able to have meaningful dialogue with moderates of both political parties in order to advance the causes of free enterprise and the essential role of the agent in the private health care delivery system.

rectly, the engines of industry that create prosperity in this country.

Strategic victory is what we need to stop this ill-advised march towards a complete government takeover of health care. The trend should be clear to all by now. More tinkering and fail-

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ure follows each unsuccessful incremental effort to "fix" or "reform" health care. Our State and Federal governments have a severe case of Munchausen's Syndrome and health care is one of its sick children. We need to take the arsenic of government intrusion away from the politicians and return control to private enterprise. The only way to do this is to support politicians and candidates who understand that the best government is limited government.

CAHU-PAC is the mechanism that will enable our strategic victory. By supporting moderates of both parties our collective voice becomes louder. By cultivating working relationships with current leaders as well as up-and-coming candidates, we can begin to turn the tide our way. Instead of being a reactive force playing defense we can become an offensive force for strategic

and positive change in the health care delivery system. Games are rarely won by blocking punts. We need to put points on the board. Putting points on the board means that CAHU-PAC must become a \$500,000 PAC. Strategic victory will be achieved with the right combination of grass roots and professional advocacy that is supported consistent PAC contributions.

CAHU-PAC has made great strides this year thanks to the generosity of members committed to the cause. For those of you who have contributed thank you. All I would like you to do today is to make copies of our PAC contribution form and ask other CAHU members, health insurance agents and company representatives who are non-contributors to join. Your employees should also consider making a small contribution; without private enterprise

health insurance they might be looking for a new job.

For those members who do not contribute to CAHU-PAC all I can tell you is this. Your reluctance to make a minimal contribution of \$21 per month is preventing us from taking the offensive against those who have no appreciation for the health of Americans or respect for the important work that we do. At risk is the best health care delivery system in the world. Not to mention your job. Please take a moment now to make a minimal pledge to CAHU-PAC by completing the contribution form and faxing it in to our administrative offices today.

Strategic victory is the goal. CAHU-PAC is the answer.

God bless you all and the United States of America!



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