
Editorial

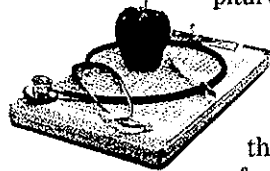
THE ISSUE: National health care legislation

OUR STANCE: Rational debate with accurate information is needed.

Health care debate should be rational

If anything is clear after a month of raucous town hall "hearings" on health care, it's that thoughtful discussion and consideration of how to fix the nation's ailing health care system is needed more than ever.

The Wisconsin Hospital Association is trying to do its part to encourage a healthy discussion. In a series of meetings with Wisconsin newspaper editorial boards and in radio ads, hospital executives are calling on members of Congress to look to Wisconsin for examples of what works in health care and apply those lessons to the national reform agenda.



What is Wisconsin doing right? WHA points to the state's low rate of uninsured — the state ranks second in the nation in people with insurance coverage. The group also notes that Wisconsin scores high in providing quality health care services — the state came in first in overall quality according to a recent national report card.

To be sure, hospital executives are motivated to promote their industry's successes lest they lose something under national reforms. But they're also on target when they say that the country needs a calm and rational exchange of ideas that focus on ensuring that all Americans have access to affordable, high-quality health care.

Most Wisconsin residents may have insurance, but the fact is that many are only a job-loss away from losing that insurance. And because health care costs have been soaring in the double digits for the past several years, many people also are just an illness away from bankruptcy.

"The reality is this has not been a rational debate," a local hospital executive said in a meeting with The Business Journal's editorial board.

He's right. Too much time has been wasted on arguments over false and misleading information on what health reform really means.