



KARL VAN ROY

STATE REPRESENTATIVE

For Immediate Release
Contact: Rep. Karl Van Roy

February 7, 2006
1-888-534-0090

Van Roy's Views: Healing an Ailing Health Care System

Making health care more accessible and more affordable for Wisconsinites is one of my goals as your Representative. However, as health care costs sky-rocket, achieving this goal has become increasingly difficult. Our health care system is sick. To heal it, we must find ways to make insurance available to more people, to foster personal responsibility in financing health care, and to empower individuals to make smart health care decisions for themselves. Last week, the Assembly passed several bills addressing these issues which I was pleased to support with my vote.

Assembly Bill 926, the Co-op Care Trailer bill, enables individuals, small businesses, farmers and others to purchase group health insurance coverage. Co-op Care allows individuals that have traditionally had a hard time getting affordable insurance to pool together and purchase insurance at lower rates. As a cosponsor of AB 926, I am excited that the bill makes health insurance less expensive for people who used to have to pay some of the highest coverage costs or faced such exorbitant insurance rates that they could not afford insurance at all. AB 926 is an innovative way to help uninsured and underinsured individuals enroll in affordable coverage.

The Health Transparency Act, Assembly Bill 907 is another example of innovative health care legislation. The bill uses the Wisconsin Health Information Organization to compile data on provider and insurer costs and then makes the information available to the public. Because of AB 907, patients will now be able to shop around for the best price on medical services. As a result, the bill encourages competition among health care providers, driving down costs by the force of the free market. Most importantly, AB 926 gives health care consumers greater knowledge about the services and products they are purchasing. By collecting data on the cost and quality of health care across Wisconsin, AB 907 makes patients informed consumers and empowers people to take charge of their own health care decisions.

The Assembly also passed Assembly Bill 683, which updates advanced practice nurse prescribers (APNs) functions. The bill allows APNs to authorize certain medical actions that only physicians can currently order, as long as the APN enters into a written agreement with the physician authorizing those actions. By eliminating a layer of medical bureaucracy, AB 683 provides the same quality care at a lower cost to consumers.

Assembly Bill 722 requires out-of-state pharmacies doing business in Wisconsin to follow a certain protocol requiring these pharmacies to be licensed in their state of origin. The purpose of AB 722 is to ensure that the same safeguards which are in place for individuals who purchase prescription drugs from traditional drugstores are extended to those who choose to purchase drugs on the internet. Now Wisconsinites can shop around for lower prescription drug prices and still know they are receiving medication from a reputable, licensed pharmacy.

I know there is more work to be done to cure our health care system, but these bills constitute important steps towards reforming health care in the state. We will continue to work hard to keep Wisconsin's health care system back on the road to recovery.