



EDITORIAL

by Monsignor William J. Linder

A False Choice Really Equals A Lie

If you have been listening to the naysayers of reforming America's broken healthcare system, you have repeatedly heard the argument that President Obama needs to keep his focus on the economy. Even as the President recently convened a Bipartisan Healthcare Summit to solicit ideas from both parties on the subject, those who find it easier to "just say no" continued to beat the drum that the President's time and effort would be better spent on stimulating the economy. The false choice many Americans are being told their leaders must then choose between is this: reforming healthcare or getting the economy off the critical list. What they are not told is that one of the biggest reasons the economy fell into a slump in the first place is because health care spending is simply out of control, now accounting for 17.3 percent of this country's gross domestic product, or overall economic output. Americans last year were forced to pay more when they went to see a doctor or pick up their medicine from the pharmacy than ever before. That means families who are already straining to make ends meet are seeing more of their dollars go towards healthcare, especially if they have lost a job and their benefits. No wonder the health care tab in this country was a staggering \$2.5 trillion last year. That seems hard to comprehend, but not really if you are an uninsured person who lies awake at night wondering where the money will come from to pay for the costly, but recommended, surgery you know will prolong your life. Don't let anybody convince you that reforming the nation's healthcare system will come at the expense of getting the economy back on track. Rather, true healthcare reform will be the stimulus that helps ensure the train is righted and doesn't derail again.