

WisDems: Republicans caused Wisconsinites' spiking health care costs

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MADISON — In October, Gov. Scott Walker's deputy commissioner of insurance J.P. Wieske admitted that President Donald Trump's sabotage of health care insurance markets was a leading factor in the skyrocketing health care premiums set to be faced by Wisconsinites.

At the time, Trump took steps to end Cost Sharing Reduction payments, a purposeful sabotage of the American health-care system, predicted to spike Wisconsinites' health care premiums by an average of 36%.

But Republicans' sabotage of the American health insurance system began years ago, via dozens of attempts to repeal the Affordable Care Act with no plan whatsoever to replace it. Then, starting early last year, Republicans, attempted to force through a series of Affordable Care Act repeal bills that would have stripped health care away from up to 30 million Americans and ended protections for people with preexisting conditions.

"Thanks to the strong advocacy and great work of the American people to save health care, Republicans were unsuccessful," noted Democratic Party of Wisconsin Chair Martha Laning. "Democrats support affordable, quality health care for all."

Months of uncertainty about the future of the American health care system took a toll: Insurers such as Anthem Health Insurance pulled out of health insurance

markets, including in Wisconsin, citing, Republican and Trump Administration-catalyzed “continual changes and uncertainty in federal operations, rules and guidance, including cost-sharing reduction subsidies and the restoration of taxes on fully insured coverage.”

Republicans haven’t slowed their health care market sabotage in the intervening months, either. In December, congressional Republicans passed and Trump signed the Republican tax law that additionally has the effect of spiking Americans’ health care costs by 10% while leaving 13 million more Americans uninsured.

Meanwhile, a bipartisan group of Republicans and Democrats in Congress, including Senator Tammy Baldwin, have for months advocated for Congress to pass the bipartisan Murray-Alexander deal that would stabilize insurance markets to head off premium spikes.

Sadly, Wisconsin Republicans, including Speaker Paul Ryan and Senator Ron Johnson opposed the bipartisan Murray-Alexander fix. So, too, did U.S. Senate candidates Leah Vukmir and Kevin Nicholson, whose opposition is tantamount to an endorsement of a 36% premium hike on Wisconsinites.

In a desperate campaign frenzy, Walker is taking it even further claiming he is fixing something he continues to break.

“Gov. Walker is attempting to gloss over the Republican attack on Wisconsinites’ health care by grasping for provisions of Obamacare in an attempt to distract from GOP destruction of health care,” said Laning. “He’s in the toughest campaign of his lifelong political career, attempting to rewrite Republicans’ embarrassing sabotage, using his reinvention of the truth through “reinsurance.”

Make no mistake: Republicans are solely responsible for Wisconsinites’ rising health care costs.

“Insurance companies, and even Gov. Walker’s own insurance commissioner, have been crystal clear: Republicans are responsible for Wisconsinites’ spiking health care costs,” added Laning. “Skyrocketing consumer costs are a product of years of Republican sabotage of the Affordable Care Act, and Wisconsin Republicans cannot hide that they support efforts to strip away millions of Americans’ coverage and end protections for people with preexisting conditions.”