

...Coalition

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54 percent of the care to which they are entitled in order to be and stay well.

It goes on to state, “Mismatches of this magnitude between ideal and actual practices would not be tolerated in most industries. Why are they permitted to persist in health care, where they cost lives and produce pain and suffering?”

It answers the question with a call to arms for policymakers: “The status quo—clearly, undeniably—is not working. It leaves tens of millions of Americans with no health insurance at all. It allows costs to skyrocket year after year, putting coverage out of reach for millions of Americans and compromising the vitality of our economy and its capacity to create and sustain jobs. And it jeopardizes the safety of patients because of widespread sub-standard care. The status quo is not acceptable. It is time—it is past time—to change it . . . the coalition believes that the United States needs to mount an all-out effort to combat this hidden epidemic—now, before millions of more Americans die needlessly from the ministrations of a health care system

that they turn to for help, not harm.”

While not recommending what type of change is required, the report is clear that any attempt at reform must be “system wide and comprehensive.” It is clear that traditional policy approaches that embrace incremental steps will not work.

“The coalition is calling for system-wide reforms, not for changes that would apply to only some payers, patients, or providers. Unless reform is system-wide, gains in some sectors or for some groups are likely to be offset by losses elsewhere.”

The MNA concurs with the Coalition’s assessment and has been pushing for reform of the system through a single payer, taxpayer-financed health care system, and it has supported legislation to create such a system in Massachusetts. At the end of the most recent legislative session, MassCare—a coalition of 70 organizations fighting for this legislation—was successful in convincing the legislature to fund a study of the feasibility of a single payer system, which will be completed next year. ■