

Your Capitol Voice
Rep. Bobby Kaufmann

Health Care- Last year, Iowa made national headlines when two of the three statewide health insurance carriers announced that they would no longer be participating in the individual insurance marketplace. This left 72,000 Iowans with just one choice for health insurance, and to make matters worse, premiums would be increasing by 43-56%. Our House Speaker, Linda Upmeyer, is a health professional and has led on this issue throughout her legislative career. I have used many of her words on the issue of health care for this column.

In an effort to stabilize Iowa's insurance market, our state Insurance Commissioner put together a temporary solution, known as the "Stopgap Measure." This would have given Iowans an option for health coverage. This plan was required to receive federal approval from the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). Unfortunately, due to the inflexibility of Obamacare and the Feds, Iowa was forced to withdraw the Stopgap plan.

The Legislature is working on several proposals to deal with the rising costs of health care. One of these proposals is a bill that allows qualifying organizations to sell health benefit plans, providing Iowans with a lower cost alternative to traditional health insurance. These plans work similar to traditional health insurance, providing necessary coverage, but come at nearly half the cost. Senator Waylon Brown is also working on an additional plan that would allow associations to pool together for health insurance.

Another health bill that we are looking at this session is a bill that deals with "telehealth." This will make Iowans healthier by ensuring more access to essential health care services in rural areas of the state.

Many rural parts of Iowa have limited access to a doctor and other important health services. Faced with these barriers, some Iowans have a hard time getting the care they need due to having to travel long distances. One solution to this problem is the expansion of telehealth services, which would allow an Iowan to speak with, visually see, and be treated by a doctor using audio/visual technology. Our bill expands insurance coverage so that telehealth care is covered by health insurance, just like health insurance would cover a face to face visit between a patient and their healthcare professional. This will expand access to both physical and mental healthcare services and providers.

We are also continuing to monitor the Medicaid program and are working on legislation to increase access to mental healthcare. I have written in past columns about this problem and know we are working on a solution.

Card Skimming- Criminals have always found innovative ways to steal the hard earned money of honest citizens. This has certainly been the case as more and more consumers move away from using cash to buy goods and services, and instead use credit cards and mobile payment. Unfortunately, a method of theft that has become increasingly common in Iowa is the use of card-skimming devices that are installed on gas pumps, ATMs, and credit card readers.

House File 2199 passed the House this week, which will protect Iowans from these types of theft by penalizing criminals who use card-skimming devices to steal credit card and financial information from Iowans. We will continue to keep a watch for new and necessary ways to protect our citizens from theft.

Capitol visitors: Mike Shuger and Al Kroeger, Wilton; Kirk and Michelle Trede and Carson, Durant; Don Roth and Dave Mohr, Tipton; Dave Timmerman, Bennett; Bill Petersen, Muscatine.

Listening Post Schedule (March 3): 9 AM- Muscatine Community College

Contact Rep. Kaufmann:

[E-mail-Bobby.Kaufmann@legis.iowa.gov](mailto:Bobby.Kaufmann@legis.iowa.gov)

Phone-515-281-3221

Mail-1527 330th St., Wilton IA 52778