

Cab Gab
by Abe Mittleman

Health Insurance-The Truth

There are millions of Americans that cannot afford the premiums that Health Insurance Companies charge. Taxi drivers in New York City are amongst them. A recent study concluded:

Of those taxi drivers with health insurance, 24% were covered by their spouse—not because they had their own health plan.

The estimated cost of uncompensated care for taxi drivers without insurance is approximately \$13 million per year.

45% of taxi drivers who visited the hospital in the past year had no health insurance.

44% of taxi drivers who take prescription medication have no health insurance.

Of taxi drivers surveyed who had both a doctor's visit and a stay in the hospital in the last year—a group particularly in need of insurance and prescription drugs—41% were without insurance.

The study was conducted by New York City Councilman Eric N. Gioia. Mr. Gioia was quoted as follows: *“Taxi drivers are the invisible face of New York’s transit—and my study found they are also potentially among the most unhealthy,” said Councilman Gioia. “Every day, thousands of taxi drivers go to work without health insurance, despite working a stressful and unhealthy job. Taxi drivers are essentially a part of our public transportation system—making the city run—and yet unlike public employees, they have no guarantee of health care. We need to do more.”*

It’s ironic that starting in November we will be required to collect a surcharge to help the MTA pay for the expenses of their operations. MTA workers have full health benefits!

As for the rest of the American people who do not have health insurance and others who do but are not covered for all procedures and those who have coverage

and are denied benefits on technicalities there are some insurance insiders who are coming forward for the first time. This is good news.

There is a very revealing video on the internet that is a must watch for everyone who is concerned about health care. Journalist Bill Moyers interviews Wendell Potter. Mr. Potter is a former Vice President of Cigna, one of the largest health insurers in the United States. Mr. Potter tells all. His conscience has gotten the best of him. All suspicions about health insurance companies are confirmed in this interview. You will have no doubts that the only way to go is for a Government run system for all Americans, as is the case in all other industrialized countries around the world. Here is the link:

<http://www.pbs.org/moyers/journal/07312009/watch.html>

The biggest obstacle is the insurance companies and the lobbyists who want to keep things just the way they are with their profits intact. After watching the video described above you will understand how they pay for what they want. You will see how they buy Senators and Congressmen in order to get their way.

You can help! Make these calls. Let your representatives know you want a single payer system.

Senator Schumer: 202-224-6542

Senator Gillibrand: 212-668-6262

E-Mail the White House: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/CONTACT>

The Calm Before the Storm

No one is really mad yet. This may not be the case come November. That is when we are supposed to start collecting a fifty-cent surcharge on each fare for the MTA. I'm predicting all hell is going to break out. Drivers will be shocked when they finally realize they are working to subsidize the MTA, its workers and passengers.

Pedi-Cab Rules

It's great that short of abolishing them altogether there are new rules and regulations concerning Pedi-Cabs. But, considering that just about every one of

them acts in ways that are contrary to these rules and regulations and just about all of them don't obey any of the traffic rules, it seems impossible that these rules and regulations are enforceable.

Don't get me wrong! There is nothing more about pedicabs that I would like to see then to have them loaded one by one onto police trucks and escorted off the road! This is what should be done to insure public safety. Tickets aren't enough!