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Single Payer Healthcare and New York State

It goes without saying (but I will, of course) that there are very few people in the United States, if any, who would say that the Federal healthcare system is perfect and in no need of changes, the same argument going to New York State and its constituents. Historically, MACNY public policy polls almost always rank the rising costs of healthcare as one of our members' top concerns that hinders business and sector growth.

Albany lawmakers have tried for years to address this concern. One such method that has been tossed around and introduced for years (but never passed into Law) is the creation of a New York State Single Payer Healthcare System. However, while years of passage in one House only to be killed in another has prevented this proposal to ever see the light of day and becoming Law (and in turn being taken seriously by New Yorkers as potentially becoming a reality), increased traction and public attention on this issue coupled with potential leadership changes in the next election cycle have New York constituents and business organization alike uniting together to fight against its passage.

I think the most important thing to note here is the mutual exclusivity between the issue of Universal Health Care coverage for all New Yorkers, and this legislation for Single Payer Healthcare system, because many think the two are the same thing, which they are not. "Universal coverage" refers to a healthcare system where every individual has health coverage. On the other hand, a "single-payer system" is one in which there is one entity—usually the government—responsible for paying healthcare claims, which is precisely what the Single Payer Healthcare legislation that is

introduced in both the Assembly (A.4738A) and Senate (S.4840-A) calls for.

Based on the statistic that 95% of New Yorkers already have healthcare coverage, I am uncertain this method is solving the true concerns and problems with current healthcare, with the most concerning to our members being the high costs. In fact, opponents to the legislation claim that Single Payer Healthcare would do just the opposite. All Single Payer programs, if passed into Law, would be paid for by taxes and taxes alone, with cost estimates for NYHA implementation ranging from \$250 billion to \$380 billion annually. To compare what this would do to already high taxes, think of this: New York's 2018-2019 budget was \$168 billion in total spending. At a minimum cost of \$250 billion, Single Payer would require an additional \$100 billion in spending just for healthcare alone.

Also troubling? There is no other State in the nation that we can directly turn to and compare and analyze cost and impact results from Single Payer Healthcare, because no other states have adopted a single payer system. Vermont passed legislation to enact single payer but was forced to abandon it due to costs. Colorado recently placed single payer on a ballot initiative, where it was defeated 70-30. California also attempted to pass single payer legislation, but failed to do so when a legislative analysis suggested its cost could be \$400 billion a year. This alone should put New Yorkers and lawmakers on hold: if progressive States such as California and Vermont have yet to justify its costs and benefits, how can we do so without further analysis and input from those who would be impacted?

This of course brings me to my most valued source in my efforts to advocate on behalf of the manufacturing sector: all of you. I ask you to address this with folks within your company who would best understand this from the many different angles in which a complete overhaul of the current healthcare system would have on businesses. Would you and your business find benefit from a single-payer healthcare system in which all New Yorkers would receive their health insurance from a single government plan? Why or why not? What are the biggest concerns (or benefits) that you see impacting your company should a single payer policy be put in place? Please email me at kburns@macny.org, I look forward to hearing from members on the specific concerns that would come from a Single Payer Healthcare System being introduced in New York State.