



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

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## Introducing a Single Payer Health Care Plan for all New Yorkers

THOMAS K. DUANE June 7, 2011

On June 7, New York State Assembly Health Committee Chair Dick Gottfried and I introduced a single-payer health care bill ([A.7860/S.5425](#)) that would ensure comprehensive health care coverage for all New Yorkers regardless of income. Under the plan, publicly-sponsored coverage would replace insurance company coverage, and premiums would be replaced by broad-based public financing.

I have long been a proponent of single-payer health coverage. New Yorkers need and deserve security when they are sick or injured, and should not fear for how they will pay for medical bills. Primary care and access to health care is a right. A single-payer system is not only cost-efficient, but the fair and moral choice for New York.

While the State Legislature must urgently focus on passing enabling legislation for a health insurance exchange so that New York may access millions of dollars in aid available under the federal Affordable Care Act, we should always be fighting for a single-payer system. The Affordable Care Act gives states new power to modify and improve their health care delivery systems, and New York should be on the cutting edge of providing the broadest access to quality care.

As with so many other progressive struggles, the fight for an equitable, high-quality health

care system is also tied in with the need for campaign finance reform. During the public option fight in Washington, opponents of health care reform spent over \$1 million per day on lobbying. Insurance industry whistleblowers such as Wendell Potter, former Vice President of Corporate Communications for CIGNA, have written extensively about the influence of money in the battle for health care reform. To achieve a single-payer system, we must also work towards meaningful lobbying reform and public financing of political campaigns.

Federal health care reform made major improvements, but it still leaves insurance companies with too much control over premiums. Premiums are unrelated to a consumer's ability to pay. Too often, patients and their doctors are left trying to figure out what is covered and then trying to get reimbursed. New York State can and must do better.

I recently spoke about single-payer and other health care topics with Susan Arbetter, host of the public radio program “The Capital Pressroom.” You may listen to a podcast of that interview at [here](#) beginning 23 minutes and 30 seconds into the broadcast.