

Giffords: Health-care reform is our moon shot

By U.S. Rep. Gabrielle Giffords

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Last month, a Tucson father who was desperate called my office. His wife has cancer. One of his young daughters has an incurable disease. He was recently laid off and lost his health insurance.

This father was forced to find three new jobs to make ends meet — including one that offered health insurance. But coverage for his family was denied because of their pre-existing medical conditions.

Now his daughter hasn't had treatment for her illness in more than nine months and the family has lost their home to foreclosure.

There can be no doubt that our health care system is failing us. Premiums have doubled in the last nine years, increasing three times faster than real wages. We are spending too much, receiving too little and are left worrying that the insurance we have won't be enough.

Unless we do something, 14,000 Americans will lose their health insurance today — just as 14,000 Americans lost their health insurance yesterday and 14,000 more Americans will lose their health insurance tomorrow.

We are great nation. We deserve the best health care in the world.

We need reform that puts patients first. It is not right and not fair that insurance companies can deny coverage because of pre-existing conditions or impose lifetime limits on service.

I support reform that allows Americans to keep their current health-care program, keep their doctors and keep their hospitals.

I support reform that creates competition through a strong public option that lowers everyone's costs and competes with private insurers.

I support reform that allows Arizonans who lose their jobs to afford insurance so they can get back on their feet without fear of getting sick.

I support reform that will slow the growth of health-care costs and does not impose new taxes or burdens on our nation's most valuable economic contributors, small businesses.

I support reform that would allow this father to keep his insurance so his daughter and wife don't have to go without proper care.

Last week, this nation observed the 40th anniversary of humans' arrival on the moon — one of the most awesome accomplishments in the history of mankind. Now our generation has our own opportunity to make history.

A nation that can leave footprints on another celestial body is up to this challenge.

Providing Americans with health care that gives them lifetime security and peace of mind must be America's next great accomplishment.

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