A Last-Minute Healthcare Plea to Washington Lawmakers

Local News

Posted by: David Haviland

Posted on : July 30, 2009 at 6:42 am

Washington, D.C. - Before members of Congress take their August recess, *AARP* is giving them a send-off, and a reminder to keep health care reform top-of-mind while they're visiting their constituents. Volunteers from across the country, including several from Washington State, are on Capitol Hill today for one-on-one meetings with lawmakers.

Among them is an insurance benefits counselor, Victoria Dain, who says she faces at least $70,000 in out-of-pocket expenses that her own insurance policy didn't cover for brain surgery.

"I think what they need to understand is that this is not a political issue. This has everything to do with the health of our citizens. Health care costs have gotten so out of hand that it has to be addressed."

Critics of a public health care plan should compare it to Medicare, argues Dain, rather than branding it "socialized medicine."

"Socialized medicine makes the assumption that the government will now own hospitals. No, we're not talking that at all. What we're talking about is looking at improving a system that exists, and asking the question, 'Why are treatments so expensive?'"

The volunteers have scheduled meetings with both Washington senators and four representatives, Baird, Inslee, Reichert and Smith. AARP states its priorities include affordable health coverage that doesn't squeeze out people ages 50 to 64 who don't yet qualify for Medicare, as well as lowering prescription drug prices and improving coverage for chronic care and long-term care.