

# Mayor's health-care plan will benefit residents

This week, Mayor Greg Stanton and the Phoenix City Council approved an ordinance that will access nearly \$200 million each year for the residents of Phoenix, related to health care for the uninsured. I am honored to have been asked to be a part of the mayor's creative solution to a growing issue for hospitals and residents.



**My Turn**

MICHAEL NOWAKOWSKI

This ordinance will positively impact all residents of Phoenix, particularly those I serve in the South Mountain area. The neighborhoods in the district I service were some of the hardest hit during the downturn. Many residents lost their jobs and their health insurance. Unfortunately, District 7 also holds the record for the most foreclosed homes in Phoenix.

Hospitals in Phoenix are struggling to manage the escalating costs of serving the uninsured. Next year, Phoenix hospitals expect to rack up an astounding \$540 million in costs that will not be covered unless we take the steps proposed by the mayor.

This plan is not about a handout.

Rather, it simply accesses our city's fair share of federal dollars designated for health-care needs. The city will assess participating Phoenix hospitals on a per-bed basis. Those dollars collected will be matched 2-to-1 at the federal level.

The money will then be transferred to the Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS). Hospitals will operate at a more manageable loss related to the uninsured, with reimbursements expected to be around 66 percent.

This isn't just about providing health care for the uninsured or covering some of the costs for hospitals. It is about managing a health-care system that we all rely on and continuing job growth in the industry, rather than seeing it decline as other sectors have. We simply cannot have a healthy city without healthy hospitals.

Again, I am honored to be a part of the mayor's team, working with our hospital leaders to create this plan of action, and I look forward to hearing from you.

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The City Council approved an ordinance that will tax hospitals in order to help patients who are not insured. A city cannot be healthy without healthy hospitals. THE REPUBLIC