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## Health Care Activists: Big Insurance Companies Committing A Crime

October 19, 2009

CHARLESTON, W.Va. - Wendell Potter used to be the head of public relations for health insurance giant CIGNA, but he quit because he says he became disgusted with the company's tactics. Potter recently told an audience in Charleston that he couldn't stand being part of what he calls "the devious and sinister way" the industry was trying to scare people about health care reform. He claims the industry is just not telling the truth, and points to a recent analysis released by companies that casts doubt on the plan being debated in Congress.

"Absolutely, I would say it's fraudulent. That analysis was truly fraudulent. It was not an attempt to educate, it's an attempt to mislead."

Current ads for the industry describe it as a partner in health care reform, but Potter says they've been trying to undermine it behind the scenes. The industry denies being deceptive.

Yellow crime tape and a "body pile-up" - that has been the scene outside insurance company offices across the country as thousands of protesters declare the industry "crime scene." Activists with *Health Care for America Now* say the industry is putting profits ahead of people's health care needs. The group's regional organizer, Nancy Gomez, says lack of health insurance is associated with as many as 45,000 deaths each year in the U.S.

"One person dies every 12 minutes because they don't have affordable, quality health care. Sixty-four percent of all bankruptcies are caused by medical debt. It's a crime that the insurance industry is trying to frighten seniors."

Insurance companies say they're an easy target for activists and that uncontrolled medical costs are much more to blame than insurance companies.

Dan Heyman, Public News Service - WV

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