

## **Dr. James J. Mongan's letter published in *The Boston Globe***

FOCUS ON PARTNERS HEALTHCARE

### **Company would like to see more of a spotlight on facts**

January 29, 2009

RE "[PARTNERS, insurer under scrutiny](#)" (Page A1, Jan. 23): We are writing to put to rest the notion, first, that Partners HealthCare may have colluded with Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Massachusetts or given the insurance company any special treatment and, second, that our actions caused healthcare premiums to rise disproportionately in Massachusetts.

Once again, the Globe asserts the notion of a secret deal that favored Blue Cross. In fact, this was a rigorous and tough contract negotiation that was reported in the Globe at the time. There was no secret most-favored-nation deal with Blue Cross.

In fact, the contract we agreed to with Harvard Pilgrim Health Care at that time was better. Because HPHC was in receivership, Partners agreed to delay rate increases and purchased four of HPHC's health centers for \$44 million, which helped the company move out of receivership. This information was known to the Globe but was not reported. The Globe also did not report that Partners was getting rate increases of 0 to 2 percent from Blue Cross while the cost of care was rising 4 to 6 percent per year. Throughout the country, commercial insurance premiums had risen to cover the shortfall in Medicare and Medicaid payments to hospitals.

Once again, the Globe asserts that Partners is responsible for a "decade of rapidly escalating" healthcare costs. In fact, widely available government data show that healthcare premiums have not risen faster in Massachusetts than the rest of the country. Average annual premium increases over the last 10 years rose 8.8 percent nationally and 8.7 percent in Massachusetts.

It's past time for more of a "spotlight" on facts.

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