

enrollment periods are. Without that kind of advertising, some people never knew to get insurance or renew, further reducing the number of people who are insured.

Insurance actuaries said Trump's actions created uncertainty in the marketplace, driving premiums still higher by 30 to 40 percent. The situation became so pronounced that the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities started posting a "Sabotage Watch" on its website, listing the actions taken against the ACA by Trump, congressional Republicans and others.

All of this creates a much different situation than state legislators in Nevada faced in 2017. Democrats have increased their strength in the legislature, but the threat from D.C. is not the same. Republicans have been stymied in repeal efforts but have, particularly through the White House, done some damage to the ACA. Democrats have control of one congressional house, which blocks any legislative efforts to further injure the ACA.

So Democrats in Nevada will need to react less to D.C. this time but still will be affected by the mess that has become of federal health care policy.

## EMERGENCIES

Also during the 2017 Nevada Legislature, the lawmakers enacted one measure that amends the state constitution, a measure that does not require approval from the governor and thus avoids the danger of a veto. The resolution, Assembly Joint Resolution 14, forbids emergency room charges "greater than 150 percent of the lowest rate which the hospital or facility has agreed to accept" from Medicare.

Constitutional amendments must be approved twice by the legislature before going to a public vote, so 14 must be approved again this year.

In addition, another Sandoval veto, of 2017's Assembly Bill 382, sparked a between-legislative-sessions effort to bring the measure back in 2019. The bill would have protected patients from "surprise" billings as a result of out-of-network emergency care.

Surprise billings are caused when patients are taken to hospitals that are not in their insurance network. It also includes patients who are at an in-network emergency room but receive treatment from an out-of-network physician—the

kind of thing insurance corporations expect stricken patients to navigate but that drives those patients crazy.

The measure adopted and then vetoed in 2017 resulted in talks between

Sprinkle and other health care advocates with industry representatives in the past months, which resulted in some areas of agreement. But the group ran out of time, so final language for legislation was never achieved. Sprinkle is having a bill drafted that will serve as a vehicle in efforts to reach an agreement during the legislative session, which begins

Feb. 4. Like Sprinkle's 2017 measure, the surprise billings effort is causing chatter in the health care industry, with items appearing in places like Becker's Hospital Review.

A list of the actions taken by Congress to undermine the Affordable Care Act can be found at <https://tinyurl.com/yb87nhja>

**2019 is shaping up as a health care year at the Nevada Legislature.**

## Sick day



The tall one is Paula Rood. The short one is Carly—just one name, like Cher. We encountered them at Fairgrounds Animal Hospital, where Carly was getting care. She is one of three rabbits Rood takes to senior citizen homes where they give soft, furry comfort to residents.

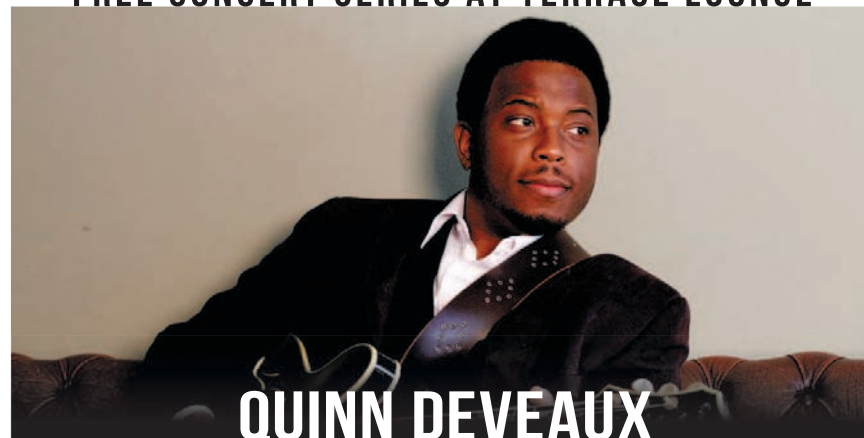
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