

(October 6, 2005) Durbin: Uninsured Americans Must be Protected from Price Gouging by Hospitals

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Bi-partisan Bill Requires Hospitals to Disclose Price of Top Procedures

WASHINGTON, DC - With charges varying significantly from one hospital to another, U.S. Senator Dick Durbin (D-IL) today introduced bipartisan legislation requiring hospitals to report the prices of the 25 most frequently performed in-patient and out-patient procedures and the 50 most commonly prescribed drugs. Durbin said the bill, known as the Hospital Price Reporting and Disclosure Act, will provide uninsured Americans with information to protect them against price gouging.

"Being one of the 46 million uninsured Americans is hazardous to your health and to your wallet. Some hospitals charge just \$120 for a chest x-ray, others more than \$1,500 for the same procedure," Durbin said. "Until we find a way to provide every American with health insurance, the least we can do is to make sure that they will not be gouged at the hospital. Uninsured Americans deserve a level playing field and this bill will help shine the light on these outrageous price inequities."

Durbin noted that Illinois has been a leader in providing consumers with access to pricing information from hospitals and ambulatory surgery centers. In addition to the Illinois Right-to-Know legislation that passed the state legislature this year, Illinois has a law requiring hospitals to report in-patient procedure prices and quality data. Durbin said his bill will give consumers across America access to a similar type of price information.

The Hospital Price Reporting and Disclosure Act was cosponsored by Senators, Republicans Jim DeMint (SC) and John Cornyn (TX), Dick Durbin (D-IL). A companion bill has been introduced in the House by U.S. Representatives Dan Lipinski (IL) and Bob Inglis (R-SC)

"I want to thank Sen. Durbin for his leadership in the Senate on this issue, and I look forward to continuing working with him and our colleagues in protecting Americans from wildly divergent hospital prices," Congressman Lipinski said.