

OPINIONS

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Insurance industry protects consumers

I write in response to [Julia Vaughn's Forefront column June 13] titled "State protects insurers better than consumers" and its mistaken view that insurance commissioner Stephen Robertson's support of medical loss ratio reform does nothing to protect consumers.

Despite what the author and many political proponents think, there are people within the insurance industry who are looking out for consumers, including bro-

kers, carriers and providers.

Brokers educate consumers on their health care coverage choices, help them select the most appropriate plans for their specific needs and serve as their advocate if problems arise.

Subject to strict state licensing laws and education requirements, agents, brokers and consultants are critical to not only the health insurance enrollment process but also in serving the health insurance coverage needs of individuals and employers after the point of sale.

It is important to note that the Indiana Department of Insurance is there to ensure that brokers and carriers work within the law. They are there to issue guidance

on how we all must conduct our business within the insurance industry.

The Indiana Department of Insurance works daily with consumers to ensure that the carriers deliver on what they promised. As a matter of fact, they have an entire Consumer Services division that handles concerns of the consumer.

Most people are unaware that insurance carriers already run on a slim budget, as it is portrayed differently. The health insurance industry posted a slim 2.2-percent profit margin in 2008—one-fifth the margin enjoyed by the securities industry and one-tenth that of the pharmaceutical sector.

Rules for minimum loss ratios are

squashing competition in the insurance marketplace. As a result of additional costs that are necessary to prepare for the implementation of Patient Protection & Affordable Care Act, American Community and Principal Financial have both pulled out of the market in Indiana.

The nation's agents, brokers and consultants look forward to continuing their role as their advocates in the coverage process.

Susan Rider
president-elect

Indiana State Association of Health Underwriters