

HOME

- [Business](#)
- [Cartoons](#)
- [Columnists](#)
- [Editorial](#)
- [Entertainment](#)
- [Gossip](#)
- [Horoscope](#)
- [Features](#)
- [Lottery](#)
- [Market Watch](#)
- [News](#)
- [Reviews](#)
- [Savvy Shopper](#)
- [Sports](#)
- [Weather](#)

- PAST ISSUES**
- [Archives](#)
- [Last 7 Days](#)

- INTERACTIVE FEATURES**
- [Classified](#)
- [Shopping](#)
- [TV Listings](#)
- [Word Games](#)

Send us Your Comments



Want the



**Guess the Market
on Y2K and
Win \$3,000**

EDITORIAL

A ROTTEN DEAL ON HEALTH CARE

That multi-billion-dollar health-care deal announced with smiling faces and hearty backslaps in Albany on Friday is being hailed as a landmark event -- and, indeed, it appears to be just that. Among other things, it:

Marks the largest expansion of publicly financed health care in New York since Nelson Rockefeller designed the nation's most lavish version of Medicaid in 1966 -- very nearly bankrupting the state in the process;

Fails to reform medical-education programs that milk New York taxpayers unmercifully to finance the training of thousands of doctors who promptly leave the state to practice elsewhere;

Doubles the state's cigarette taxes, which no doubt will reduce smoking -- but which also presents unparalleled opportunities to New York's ubiquitous butt-smuggling industry. It will also vastly expand the commercial advantages enjoyed by tax-free stores on Indian reservations, at the substantial expense of upstate retailers;

Represents a virtually unconditional capitulation to one of New York's most influential special-interest spokesmen -- Dennis Rivera of the health-care workers union. This is a lesson that will not be lost on all the other well-financed pleaders in Albany.

Rivera began assessing his Local 1199 membership a couple of years ago, eventually building a \$14-million fund used to pay for a series of television and radio ads that warned of an imminent crisis in New York unless the state's uniquely expansive, and expensive, health-care system was maintained in every detail.



86103189

Indeed, if it were not expanded.

Obviously, the ads had traction. Gov. Pataki, Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver and

Senate Majority Leader Joe Bruno started falling all over each other to make sure that Rivera got his way.

Never mind that per-capita Medicaid in the state already is nearly triple the national average; that New York spends almost as much on the program (\$26 billion in 1998) as California and Texas combined (\$27 billion) -- or that it costs the typical four-person family in New York \$5,000 a year to support the program.



Pataki, Silver and Bruno propose to expand Medicaid eligibility -- with no apparent plan to cushion local governments, which now supply 25 cents of every dollar spent on the program.



Never mind that New York now spends more on graduate medical education than California, Florida, Michigan, Ohio and Pennsylvania between them; that it costs four times more to train a physician here than elsewhere -- or that more than half of the doctors produced in New York go elsewhere to practice.

Pataki, Silver and Bruno have just agreed to maintain the status quo on graduate medical education -- jot and tittle.

And so on.

New Yorkers have become no healthier, relative to residents of other states, in the three-plus decades since Rockefeller fashioned the nation's most lavishly funded public health-care system. Quite the contrary, in fact.

Now comes another Republican governor, George Pataki, to announce:

"I am confident that with this program, we are going to have the best health care in the country, possibly the world."

Possibly

86103120

February.

The most expensive, for sure.

E-Mail This Story to a Friend

Your Name

Your E-Mail Address

Your Friend's E-Mail

[Story Index](#) | [Home Delivery](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [How to Advertise](#) | [Customer Service](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [E-Mail Directory](#) | [Other Newscorp Sites](#)

New York Post®, nypostonline.com™, nypost.com™ and newyorkpost.com™ are registered trademarks of NYP Holdings, Inc. Copyright 1999 NYP Holdings, Inc. All rights reserved.

86103191