



Amerigroup

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Supporting State Governments

Nelson Sabatini has coped with a lot of health problems. As a former Secretary of Health for the State of Maryland, Sabatini has helped ensure the well-being of 5 million people. He served in the position under two governors, one a Democrat and one a Republican.

One of the toughest health issues he ever tackled, Sabatini says, was the rapidly rising cost of Medicaid. He believes the solution lies with companies like Amerigroup.

“Medicaid is probably the most serious problem that both the states and the federal government have today,” Sabatini says. “I am convinced that managed care is going to be the thing that will change this program and possibly make it sustainable.”

Sabatini believes that Amerigroup’s approach to healthcare coverage for people enrolled in Medicaid can simultaneously accomplish two things that appear contradictory: it can help individuals lead healthier lives at the same time it saves taxpayers money.

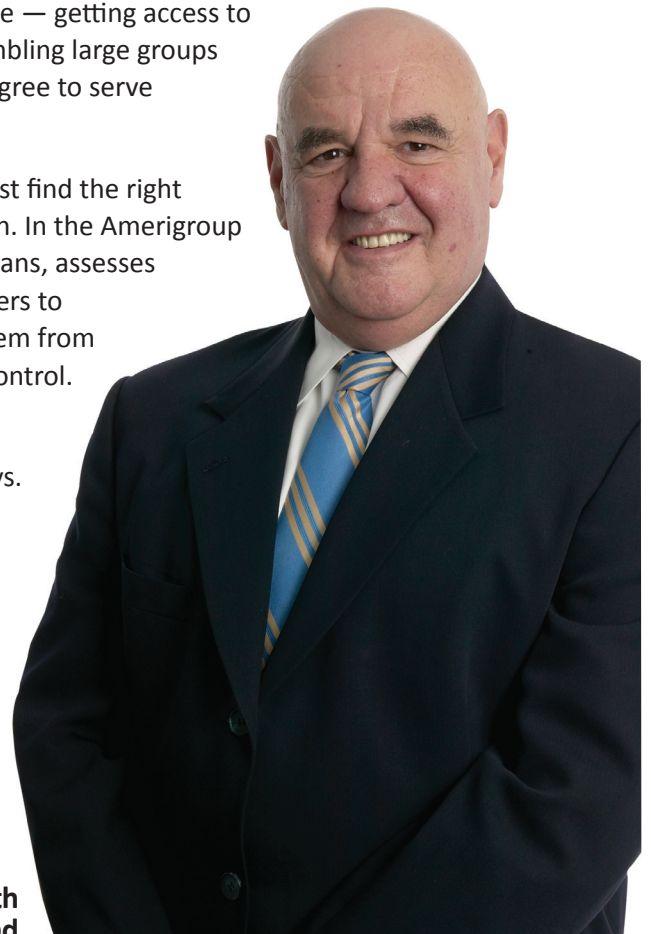
“I saw Amerigroup as a company that improved access to high quality care for poor people and also controlled the growth in costs,” he says.

Sabatini says that Amerigroup and other public-sector healthcare companies attack one of the most basic healthcare problems facing low-income people — getting access to physicians and other healthcare services—by assembling large groups of conveniently located healthcare providers who agree to serve people enrolled in Medicaid.

Under traditional Medicaid, low-income people must find the right doctor or type of healthcare they need on their own. In the Amerigroup model, the company assembles networks of physicians, assesses individual healthcare needs and encourages members to participate in a variety of programs that prevent them from getting sick and help keep chronic illnesses under control.

“Amerigroup moved into a part of the State where access to healthcare had been limited,” Sabatini says. “They made sure that the underserved population, in both rural areas and the inner city, had access to care that I don’t believe they would have had under the traditional (Medicaid) program.”

Sabatini says that “by maintaining health rather than just treating illness,” Amerigroup and other public-sector healthcare companies change the



**Nelson Sabatini, Former Secretary of Health
for the State of Maryland**

way that state government healthcare dollars are used and bring down overall healthcare costs. He praises this approach as “a more disciplined use of the healthcare system and healthcare resources.”

Sabatini believes state governments are only beginning to tap the capabilities that public-sector healthcare companies bring to Medicaid. The biggest challenge, he says, is changing the way that people with complex, long-term physical and psychological disabilities get healthcare.

“The next important step for any state is to expand programs for the disabled, the chronically ill and the frail elderly,” Sabatini says. “That’s the opportunity we must take advantage of.”

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