

AIM: Can the “free market” solve all economic problems?

Do Now: Read the excerpt from the New York Times article (February 9, 2002) and answer questions 1-3.

Coalition Forms to Reverse Rising Trend of Uninsured Americans

by Milt Freudenheim

At least two million people lost their health insurance in the last 13 months as unemployment rose and growing numbers of consumers decided they could not afford steeply rising costs. Health care economists said that at least 40.4 million Americans, based on conservative estimates, were uninsured by Jan. 31.

Beyond the personal toll for people without coverage, the sharp increase in the number of uninsured Americans is a growing concern to employers, unions and providers of care. Some said they were worried that the trend would undermine the nation's employer-based health care system.

Employers are concerned that the rising health care costs they already face for their workers will grow even faster as hospitals raise their fees to reflect the unpaid costs of uninsured patients in emergency rooms. At the same time, soaring Medicaid costs are straining state budgets and adding to pressure for tax increases, a further concern for employers.

1. How many people in the United States do not have health care coverage?
2. Why are employers concerned with the sharp increase in the number of uninsured Americans?
3. In your opinion, should health care insurance be left to market forces or is this an area where government should intervene? Explain