

Retired CIGNA VP testifies on insurers' deceptive practices. The [Washington Post](#) (6/25, Hilzenrath) notes that the "star witness at the hearing" was Wendell Potter, CIGNA's former VP for corporate communications, whose testimony "boiled down to this: Don't trust the insurers." Potter said insurers "make paperwork confusing because 'they realize that people will just simply give up and not pursue it' if they think they have been shortchanged." Referring to the industry's objection to a public plan option, Potter said he "worries 'that the industry's charm offensive, which is the most visible part of duplicitous and well-financed PR and lobbying campaigns, may well shape' healthcare reform" in a way that is more beneficial to Wall Street than to "average Americans."

On its website, [ABC News](#) (6/25, Gomstyn), provides extensive details of Potter's testimony. Potter explained how insurers "look carefully to see if a sick policyholder may have omitted a minor illness [or] a pre-existing condition, when applying for coverage, and then they use that as justification to cancel the policy, even if the enrollee has never missed a premium payment." This practice of "dumping," he added, "can have a big effect on the bottom line," especially in plans with a small number of enrollees. "All it takes is one illness or accident among employees at a small business to prompt an insurance company to hike the next year's premiums so high that the employer has to cut benefits, shop for another carrier, or stop offering coverage altogether," he said. In the second half of the article, ABC News publishes testimonials from those whose coverage was rescinded by insurers.