



Health care reform efforts prompt lobbying bonanza

*By CNN Senior Producer Kevin Bohn
February 24, 2010*

Washington (CNN) - As politicians ramp up efforts aimed at trying to forge a consensus on health care reform, there's more evidence of just how intense the activity is behind the scenes at trying to influence the outcome.

More than 1,750 companies and organizations hired about 4,525 lobbyists in 2009 whose work was aimed at the issue, according to a new study from the Center for Public Integrity, an organization which tracks lobbying and spending. That translates to 8 health care lobbyists for each member of Congress.

Among those who registered to lobby in an attempt to help determine the contents of a health care bill included 207 hospitals, 105 insurance companies, 85 manufacturing companies as well 745 groups of trade, advocacy and professional organizations.

In 2009 the health sector spent \$544,367,861 on lobbying, according to the center, and that doesn't include efforts by those in other sectors who would be involved in the health care issue as well, such as the Chamber of Commerce and the American Association of Retired Persons.

Efforts to gain influence were also seen in other ways. For the 2010 election cycle, \$45,282,968 has been given out in campaign donations by those in the sector. More than \$200 million was spent in all of last year on television ads related to the health care reform issue, according to the Campaign Media Analysis Group, CNN's ad consultant.

As 2009 went on and health care became the dominant issue in Washington, the center reports the number of lobbyists working on it more than doubled from more than 1,400 in the first three months to almost 3,700 in the final quarter of the year.