

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

For the uninsured, clinics offer help

Regarding "Broken system/
Millions of underinsured are
immobilized by mounting medical
debt" (Health, Feb. 24):

As CEO of Vista Community
Clinic, I know that many of those
Americans are right here in San
Diego. A recent Families USA study
found that the average COBRA
premium amounts to 84 percent of
the average unemployment check.
Something doesn't add up here.

When people have to choose
between putting food on the table
or having health insurance, the
choice is clear. Basic survival wins.
The consequences are also clear:
Uninsured individuals are less
likely to receive preventative visits,
less likely to see the doctor when
they are sick and more likely to
inappropriately use the emergency
room and to receive a later-stage
diagnosis for serious illness. For the
uninsured and for our society, this
means more and more debt.

There is hope. Uninsured
individuals are able to access
discount or free care at community
clinics around the county. Through
these clinics, individuals and
families can receive affordable
medical attention, preventative
care and a full spectrum of case
management. These valuable
services help maintain good health
during transitions such as losing
a job, downsizing a small business,
exiting the military or getting
divorced. Those without health
insurance may find clinic programs
or services that can help keep them
in good health and out of debt.

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