

THE NEW YORK TIMES

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Mental Health Care

To the Editor:

It is striking that neither your Sept. 23 editorial, "The Battle Over Health Care," nor any of the letters that you published on Sept. 25 about the health policy proposals of the presidential candidates mentioned mental health despite the fact that mental and substance abuse disorders are second only to cardiac conditions as a cause of long-term disability.

In addition to the suffering inherent in mental illness, untreated depression vastly complicates the treatment of cardiac and other conditions, resulting in increased risks of disability and premature death as well as vastly increasing the costs of medical treatment.

Nearly a decade ago, the surgeon general observed that there is no health without mental health. Apparently the message hasn't gotten through.

Michael B. Friedman

New York, Sept. 25, 2007

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