

Letter: Prop. 46 deserves a 'no' vote

To the community,

California Proposition 46 is costly and deceiving to voters. It would increase costs for patients, deter doctors from practicing in California, and threaten patient privacy. The consequences are also higher for rural communities like South Lake Tahoe. I have been a physician in South Lake Tahoe for over 34 years and I'm asking our voters and patients to take a closer look; Prop. 46 just doesn't add up.

Prop. 46 will escalate insurance rates and, ultimately, increase healthcare costs for patients. The non-partisan California Legislative Analyst's Office estimates that Prop. 46 would cost patients an additional \$9.9 billion annually, that's \$1,000 a year for a family of four.

The second part of Prop. 46, also considered the "sweetener" to woo voters, would require random drug testing on physicians. While this may seem like a valuable safety measure, data shows that a minuscule percentage of harm is done by impaired physicians and Prop. 46 would exclude testing physicians who practice in private offices. Medical facilities, including Barton Memorial Hospital, already have proven and effective safety measures in place to protect patients from harm.

Lastly, Prop. 46 would require doctors use a state-controlled database before prescribing certain controlled substances and to discourage patients who "doctor hop" for pain medication. But the Prop. 46 solution to this real problem is inadequate: the database is unreliable, understaffed, and lacks security measures. This will only burden medical providers to operate an additional program that is not ready or secure for

statewide use.

I encourage voters to take a closer look at this proposition. Please join Barton Health and over 500 other organizations across party lines and vote "no" on Prop. 46 in the upcoming election.

Paul Rork, physician and board of director Barton Health