Health Security

Union members have some of the best medical plans in the country. It takes hard bargaining to keep them that way.

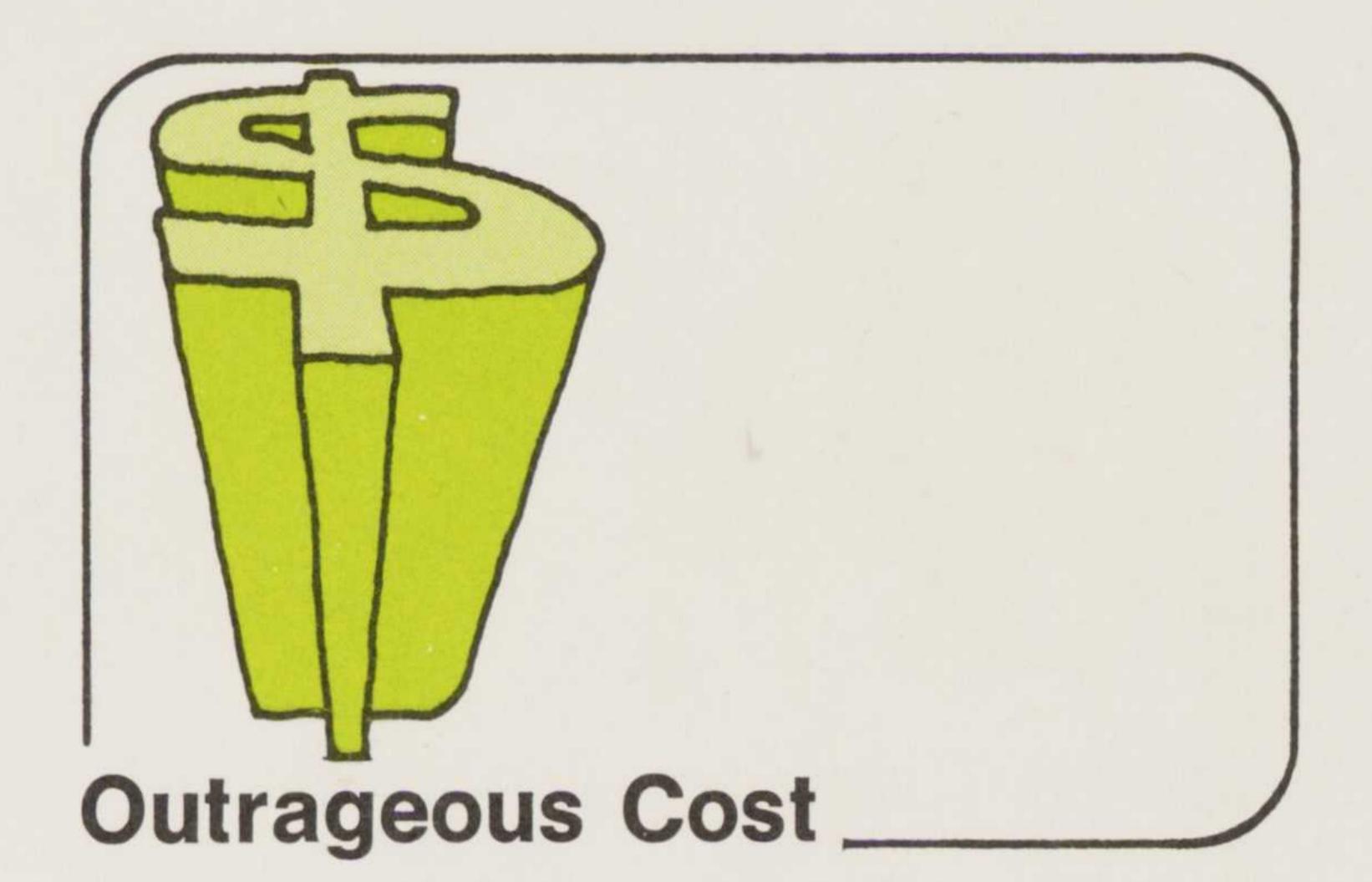
But workers are not getting their money's worth. Present health insurance practices are causing runaway inflation in medical costs.

As a result, at every bargaining session more and more money—out of the total negotiated package—must be put into higher premiums for health benefits. This doesn't mean more health benefits—just more money for the same program.

Even with dramatic improvements in union-negotiated health insurance plans, many workers are now paying more out of their own pockets for hospitals, doctors and other health services than they did 10 years ago.

Medical plans are not a gift of management. Their cost comes out of the total pay package—every penny of which is earned by workers. Employers pay premiums to insurance companies, but it's the workers' money—they earned it and they could use it for other benefits or increased wages if health insurance didn't cost so much.

As a matter of fact the costs of medical care and health insurance have gotten so high that the average American now works one month every year just to pay doctors, hospitals and insurance companies.



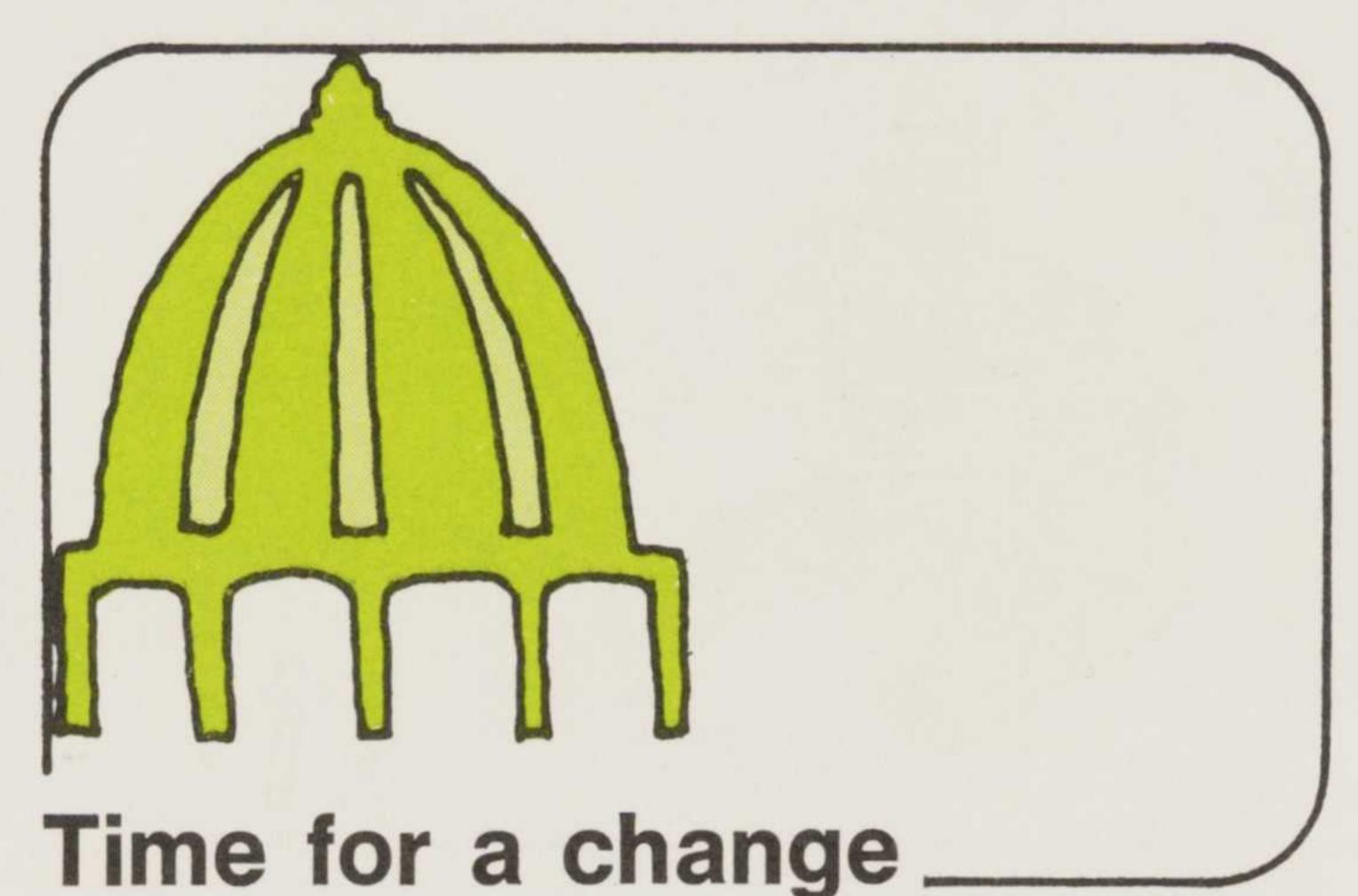
Medical care should not cost an arm and a leg, but today it does. And the American people are not getting the quality care they are paying for.

The health care system is wasteful and inefficient; hospital charges and physician fees skyrocketed two-to-four times the general cost of living over the past 20 years.

Insurance companies are not going to make health care better or less expensive. Rather, they take the workers' money and slice off a big chunk for executive salaries, advertising, stock options, commissions, overhead expenses and profits.

Almost 20 cents out of every premium dollar is not used to buy medical care for workers.

Insurance companies pay doctors and hospitals without really checking them on overcharges and waste. The only checks are on sick people trying to use the benefits paid for by their wages. Insurance company fine print—deductibles, co-insurance, cut-offs, limitations and exclusions—are used to disallow claims, limit the costs to insurance companies and discourage people from seeking preventive care.



This has been going on for 20 years

now—the same 20 years of galloping inflation in medical costs and huge premium increases.

Insurance companies perpetuate intefficiency, waste and unfairness.

Hospitals have no reason to control costs. If the insurance companies don't pay the hospital charges, the workers have to pay it themselves.

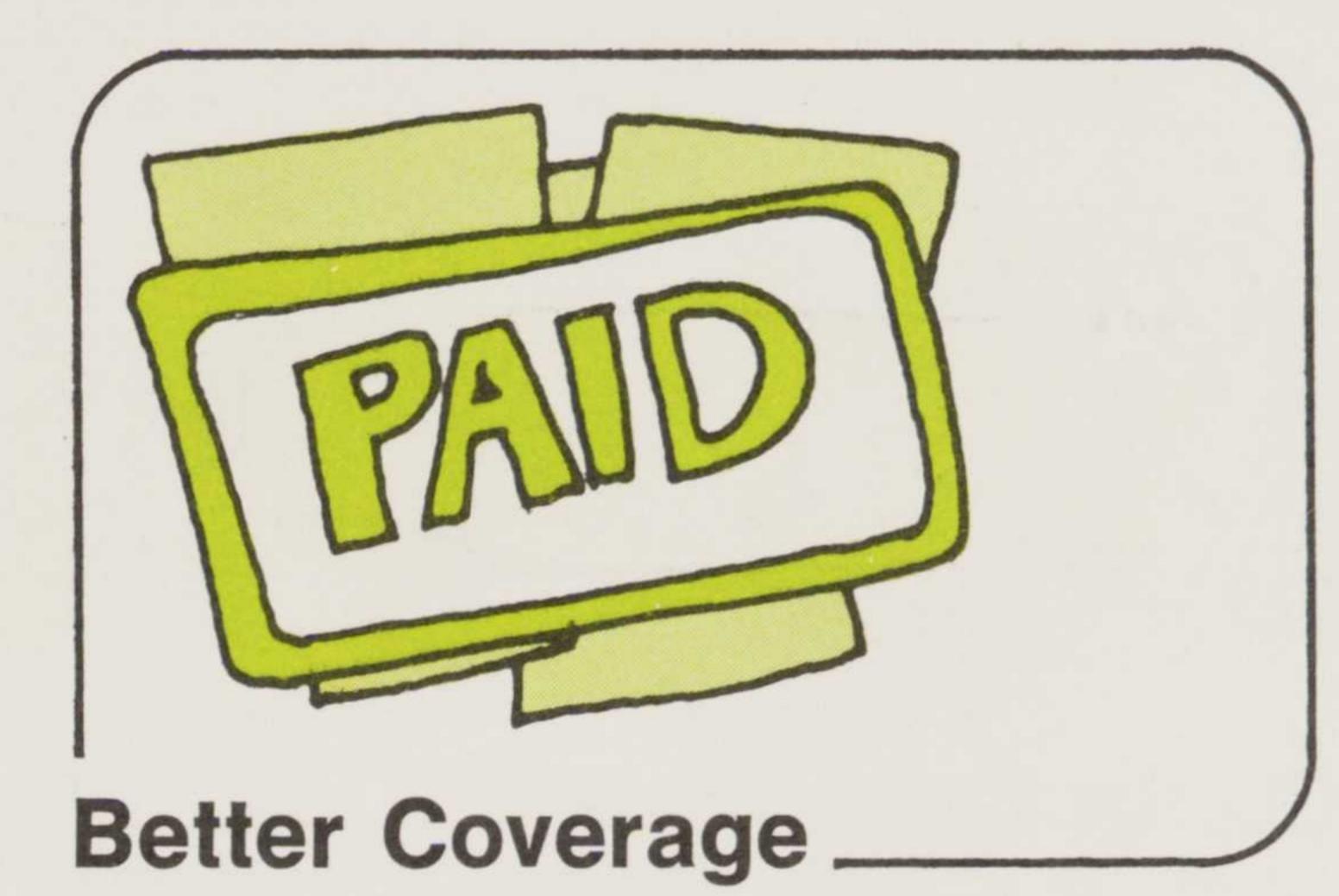
Doctors have no reason to control costs. They are paid on a fee-for-service basis, and they unilaterally decide how much they are going to charge.

Insurance companies have no reason to control costs—the more they pay out, the more they are able to raise premiums. And the workers are left holding an empty bag.

Something has to be done.

That is why the AFL-CIO and every major union in America have helped to develop the National Health Security program.

Health Security, introduced in the Senate—by Senator Edward M. Kennedy (D-Mass.) and in the House by Representatives Martha W. Griffiths (D-Mich.) and James Corman (D-Calif.), is supported by many members of both parties.



Health Security would provide even better benefits than union members have now. Just about everything, including preventive care, would be covered—and covered in full. Every physician's bill and all bills for hospital services would be paid in full. Even dental care would be covered, initially for children up to age 15 but eventually for everyone.

Everybody would be covered, whether they are working or not, laid off or looking around, retired or too young to work.

Illness doesn't stop happening when people aren't working, and health insurance coverage shouldn't stop either.

Health Security would pay all medical bills—the routine ones that mount up as well as the gigantic bills that lead to bankruptcy.