

The most lucrative job in Washington these days just might be health care lobbyist -- as prominent interest groups announce plans to pour millions of dollars into fighting over President Obama's efforts to create a universal health care system.

The White House has sought to curtail the role of lobbyists, but the heated public debate over Obama's health plan has made them very much a part of the legislative process.

The five largest private insurers and the trade group America's Health Insurance Plans spent a total of \$6.4 million in the first quarter, an increase of more than \$1 million from the same quarter last year. The industry is working to counter proposals endorsed by the White House that would offer a government health insurance option for millions of Americans.

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