

From *The Ouachita Citizen*:

Health Care Legislation Should Be Rewritten

By Dr. John Cooksey
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The goal of providing health care insurance for all American citizens is a worthy objective, and it is achievable.

Currently there are many distortions being bantered about concerning health care delivery. We hear or read some of those distortions because we do not know for sure how many Americans do not have health care insurance. It could be argued within reason that eight million to 10 million American citizens do not have health insurance for one reason or another.

President Obama's administration and the Democratic leadership in the Congress say the number of uninsured totals some 45 million people. They say insuring 45 million uninsured Americans would cost \$1.6 trillion. Though the 45 million figure has been referred to for some time now in discussing the number of uninsured in America, we only know for sure that millions of Americans don't have health insurance because they either choose not to pay for it, they can't afford it or they do not utilize programs that make health care available to them.

Anyone who has worked or served in government as I did as a flight surgeon in the Air Force and for six years as a member of the U.S. House of Representatives knows that most government-run programs are over-promised, under-funded and 90 percent of the time grow far beyond projections. When discussions ensue over the health care reform issue emphasis should be placed on insuring the eight million to 10 million uninsured who need and want health insurance but do not fit into one of the following categories:

- A. Children who are eligible for SCHIP but do not benefit from the program because their parents have not enrolled them in it;
- B. Adults who can afford health insurance but choose not to spend their income on health insurance unless it becomes mandatory;
- C. Non-citizens who are here legally but do not pay income taxes or Social Security or Medicare taxes;

Physicians and hospitals alike want everyone to have health insurance so they can pay for their health care. Most of the uninsured receive pro bono health care through the benevolence of physicians, hospitals, taxpayers (who fund city and state hospitals for the indigent) and other caregivers.

Obama and the Democratic congressional leadership apparently desire to hijack the current health-care system, which provides high quality health care to 292 million of our 300 million citizens. Anywhere from 255 million to 292 million Americans would lose their quality of health

care for the benefit of 10 million to 45 million people who may not have health insurance. Those 255 million to 292 million people would eventually give up private health care insurance and ultimately fall victim to a government-run health care delivery system. That would eventually lead to rationing of health care for those who currently enjoy the benefits of a union plan, Medicare, Medicaid and employer-based health plans.

In other words, that means some 290 million Americans would lose some health care benefits so 10 million or so people could have health insurance. There are multiple mechanisms, though, to pay for those 10 million to 45 million uninsured without disrupting or compromising the health care delivery of 290 million people. The government could write a check or provide a voucher or extend tax credits so 10 million uninsured could have private health care insurance like members of the Congress enjoy.

Did Obama not promise this during his campaign?

If Obama has forgotten his promise to provide health care insurance for all Americans like members of the Congress, the White House staff, congressional staff and others on FEHBP have, I am sure a video can be located to remind him of the pledge he made.

The Federal Employees Health Benefit Plan (FEHBP) should be good enough for the 10 million to 45 million uninsured if it is good enough for members of the Congress and other well-connected government employees.

The cost of providing health insurance for 10 million Americans could be as little as \$400 billion and not disrupt the health care of the 290 million Americans who are already insured. We could achieve "universal health care" or health care coverage for the uninsured in a fairly simplistic manner.

One of the first laws that should be repealed once "universal health care" is achieved should be the congressionally mandated requirement that everyone who seeks treatment at overcrowded emergency rooms must receive health care. Once the "universal utopia" is achieved, patients would seek health care in a private, less expensive clinic setting as opposed to going to the emergency room for medical care.

The utilization of emergency rooms for non-emergency clinic care for the uninsured adds enormously to the cost of health care for hospitals, physicians, the government and ultimately the taxpayers. Concurrent with passage of "universal health care" should be the elimination of this enormously expensive mandate courtesy of the Congress.

Who else will make sacrifices for the implementation of Obama care?

One proposal currently under consideration in the U.S. House of Representatives calls for \$500 billion of the \$1.6 trillion initial cost of Obama care or whatever you want to call it to be paid by the very wealthy in the form of a surtax or health care tax. This represents an income transfer from small businesses and entrepreneurs who made their money the old-fashioned way they

earned it.

Should these high earners make an additional sacrifice for the uninsured, who possibly smoke, use drugs, overeat and fail to exercise?

A tax system based on high taxes on the wealthy has not worked in California. It has been circumvented in California because people who are smart enough to earn great wealth are smart enough to minimize taxes.

In the meantime, let's remember that the major advocates of "universal health care," or a government-run health care program for all, are the old-line, liberal Democratic leaders of the Congress. They specifically include Nancy Pelosi, Barney Frank, Harry Reid and their cheerleader, Barack Obama. The labor Unions have been long-time advocates of "universal health care," too, though it's rather ironic the labor unions are demanding that they be exempt from most legislation the Congress is entertaining on health care reform.

There is a long list of supporting characters and groups of a government-run health care system to provide health care for all. Even the American Medical Association sold out for 30 pieces of silver.

What is the AMA's real motivation for advocating universal health care?

The AMA's first and foremost motive entails control. That would include:

1. Economic control of 15 percent of the U.S. economy;
2. Political control over 300 million Americans who would have to go to Washington and genuflect to the political leaders of the government representing the health care system;
3. Health control of new strategies and modalities for the Health Czar to experiment with as it relates to a health system run by liberals in Washington. This czar would direct a government system that would spend more money on AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases than would be spent on Americans who have cancer, heart disease, orthopedic diseases and degenerative diseases.

These same liberals would dictate rationing of health care for the elderly and those with chronic diseases. They already have shown their true colors by advocating for cuts in funding for Medicare and Medicaid recipients to pay for the 10 million Americans who do not have health insurance. This is called rationing.

Without further adieu, let's understand that the ultimate goal of advocates of a "universal health care" system is control. None of these advocates have ever shown any real sympathy for those in need of health care. They have used health care as a political tool to achieve a laudable goal of health insurance for all.

Who isn't in favor of providing health care for all Americans?

To surmise, providing "universal health insurance" and health care for all Americans are laudable goals and affordable if properly planned and delivered. However, legislation currently being considered by the Congress, as revealed, would not achieve the goals of "universal health care" and many Americans would lose benefits. Our health care delivery system as we know it would be comprised, too.

If the American people would take the time to read the health care legislation under consideration in the Congress if members of the Congress would read it, too there would be a major re-write of any and all measures pertaining to health care reform.