

Dear Ms. Spina and Ms. Patton,

As I explained to Ms. Spina in a phone conversation today, I was not aware that a meeting was planned to discuss health care issues with the Obama/Daschle transition people. I found out about it after the fact by reading the Herald's report this morning, Dec. 30. If the Herald's report is accurate, it appears that the meeting was packed with people who support a single payer (government) health care program. This is misleading, as there are many, many people in La Plata County who are not in favor of socialized ANYTHING, let alone socialized health care. Therefore, I hope you will include my thoughts in the report you are putting together to forward on to the Obama/Daschle people.

The number of uninsured Americans we typically hear is 45 million. It is never specified whether that number includes only American citizens, or if it includes illegal immigrants. However, for the sake of argument, I will assume it includes only legal citizens, which is who we should be concerned about. Based on a total population of 305 million (I believe that's accurate), that means 85% of the American people have adequate health care. In my opinion, it is imprudent to throw out a system that is working for 85% of the people. It would make more sense to analyze what is wrong with that system, why it is so expensive, and make improvements. I BELIEVE A SINGLE PAYER SYSTEM WOULD RESULT IN A LOWER STANDARD OF CARE FOR 85% OF THE PEOPLE.

Of course, there are some people who, for reasons beyond their control, truly cannot afford health insurance or adequate medical care. I want to find ways to help those people. In fact, I believe that's what Medicaid was designed to do. However, I have concerns about many of those who are uninsured, and I believe taxpayers should not be responsible for those people's life choices. Following are some examples of the people I am talking about, and there are legions of them.

Case 1: I know a college graduate, business major to be exact, living in Durango. She has had jobs in the past that provided a steady income and health insurance; however, she would rather ride horses for a living. She doesn't want to spend the money on health insurance, because it's so expensive, but she and her husband manage to take Las Vegas vacations, go to horse events far and wide, and build demolition derby cars.

Case 2: Living in the Durango area, I'm sure we all know kayakers/mountain bikers/skiers, etc. who choose to go without health insurance, but manage to kayak/mountain bike/ski all over the world and who spend copious amounts of money drinking at local bars several nights each week.

Case 3: A woman came to my house to purchase hay from me. She complained that she and her husband (they are about 50 years old) had to give up their health insurance because they couldn't afford the premiums. She was driving a Chevy Tahoe, talking on her cell phone, and buying hay to feed her daughter's eight -- EIGHT!! -- horses. I happen to know how expensive it is to properly care for one or two horses, let alone eight. Her husband had given up a corporate job with benefits and cashed in his retirement accounts so they could purchase a horse operation, which had always been her dream. As she was complaining, I was thinking, "You continue to

make stupid decisions, and that's your problem, not mine."

The point I am trying to make with these three cases, is that I believe the majority of people could afford health care if they felt a responsibility to spend their money on health care rather than discretionary items. By continuing to create entitlement programs, we ensure that they will exhibit less and less personal responsibility.

People say they want universal/single payer health care because they don't want to pay the high cost of insurance premiums. If anyone thinks the costs will go down when the government runs it, then they are seriously delusional. If people won't take responsibility for themselves, then I guess they want me and others like me to carry their load via high taxes. I'm getting pretty tired of that.

Joann and Jill, thank you for taking the time to read this and for including it in your report. If you have any questions, please feel free to call me.

Kindest regards,
Susan Patchett Hamilton

Dear Spina and Ms. Patton,

It has come to my attention that a meeting was held by the League of Women Voters in affiliation with the Obama/Daschle transition team in order to glean the interest of this area in government sponsored health care. I was not aware of the meeting but wish my opinion to be considered in any report regarding this matter.

I do not advocate single pay health care for the obvious reason that every country currently providing it has a much lower standard of care than we currently do as private provider country. Also, once the government takes over any form of socialized provisions to its citizens the financial waste and beaurocracy usually offset any benefit.

I believe that personal views on socialism are based on ones upbringing. My father was of poverty and struggled to make a success of himself in life, which he did. I was raised with the values of personal responsibility. I know many many people in Durango who are not covered by health insurance. This is because they have chosen to lead a life that allows them the freedom to pursue their passions and interests. In other words, they would rather work a job that allows them to ski, mountain bike and recreate at their chosen times and are restricted by jobs that require the discipline to make the money to pay for health insurance. My husband and I have paid out of pocket our entire lives as he is self-employed. We did without a lot of material things and vacations in order to meet our financial obligations including the cost of health insurance. Why should I subsidize all of the people who choose not to grind it out day to day as

we have? My oldest daughter has chosen to live pay check to paycheck while she pursues life as a screenwriter. I pay for her health insurance. Why should YOU be asked to subsidize her decisions by providing her government sponsored care? It should be MY choice to subsidize her and not yours and I should not have to pay for all of the others like her.

I realize there are many who simply cannot make it. There are programs for them already in place. Government sponsored health care is not the only answer to our health care cost crisis. The choice should not be either the way it is now or "go directly to the government". I appreciate your time in reading and considering my opinion for your report.

Thank you,
Margo D. Cassidy

After receiving information pertaining to SOCIALIZED Health Care. I would like to comment that I believe it is a very poor Idea and would put us in the same boat as Canada and the United Kingdom (UK).

First - Many of the Doctors left their practices and moved to other areas--many to the USA.

Second - I have known people in Canada with serious medical problems that were put on a waiting list to be treated---One died while waiting .

Three - Many people seeking treatment have sufficient money, but want to get something for nothing.

Four - Many of the 15% that possibly would qualify for the proposed treatment should be considered by incorporating a few changes to our current Health Care System, not changing the other 85%.

Five - Illegals should not be a factor in the considered Health Care Changes---They should be put into a different category.

Six - I strongly oppose changing our current system to a one payer system (Socialized Medicine), as it would make it more difficult to get immediate treatment, and would also impact many of our Doctors unfavorably.

Franklin W. Anderson

Dear Joann and Jill,
Joann Spina, Assistant county manager
Jill Patton: League of women voters

Forgive the combined letter but I just received a message that there was a meeting on health care that I was completely unaware of and feel frustrated, as I know many who feel, like myself that our voice is not being heard. I understand that there was a good turnout but many women that I have spoken with this morning were "in the dark" so to speak about this meeting. Isn't it only fair that if there is a fact finding meeting that their might be a better way to have many voices heard that just one side? We are a nation combined of many opinions but seemed to me that only one side was being heard.

I DO NOT WANT single pay health care. I am a small business owner and do not have extra money to toss around but have with great difficulty financially found a way to pay for moderate health care. I have had MANY health problems and am in process of treatment. (Sure, who wouldn't want a "free ride") But when it comes down to it I have studied the countries that have "Free Health Care" and I do not want any part of it. I think that there is a better way. I DO NOT believe that it has to be completely "One way or the other". I know that we are a very creative people, and caring about others but a free hand out is never the answer. My father always said that no one appreciates something that comes for free and I for one and tired of paying for others who just "take"!

If we as a nation want to find a solution we need to hear BOTH sides equally and get creative. I cannot just assume what was discussed at the meeting but the Herald was only spouting one side. I believe I have some good ideas but did not feel that I had an opportunity to share them. I am frustrated as I do not feel that it was a meeting that was offered to all.

Sincerely,
Gwen Buscher
Durango, Colorado

It has come to my attention that 50 people attended a meeting for input to the Obama/Daschle team on health care. These folks DO NOT represent my ideas or the population of LaPlata county. We were not aware of this meeting until the results were printed in the Durango Herald on 12/30. Why was this meeting held without more announcement of it? Why only one meeting over Christmas when many folks are distracted with the holidays and visitors? Let's be clear on something - 50 people Do NOT represent the ideas of the county.

For 50 people to be added to the sum of collected supporters on Single Payer System is a cheat on the vast majority of LaPlata residents. We weren't even asked for our opinion, where was the ballot, where were the signs posted in various places around LaPlata announcing the meeting?

As for the support of a Single Payer System: Absolutely NO, Never, NO Way. Why force change on a program that is working for over 80%+ of Americans? The vast majority of Americans take responsibility for their health care and want to keep it that way. People around the world come to America for medical treatment not available in socialist run health care programs. It's a travesty to claim that the government train that derailed Social Security, Fannie and Freddie are going to better oversee health care. Please add my comments to your opinion poll being forwarded to the new administration. Thank you in advance.

Diane Thomas
