

COMMENTARY

A mouse in the house on health care

The mouse scurrying from the rodent-filled Rayburn House Office building that's roaring reforms in its cheesy version of a health care bill smells of stinking thinking. Wake up to the whiff of legislative limburger, America. Soon, the Senate political pâté of health care with its own rats in the ratatouille will be coming.

American air is already fouled by exhortations of giddy "Gore-Go-Nuts" huffing their way through the "crap-charade and raid" debacle of carbon corruption that only credits naïveté.

Let's clear the air a bit and look at this health care issue as it is coming at us first. Yes, 50 million or so folks are under or uninsured. Illegal aliens are a costly portion whose care we cannot refuse and the remainder is the healthy young and those with an average of four months at risk.

Let's look at the delusion about the quality of U.S. care. We previously debunked the WHO rankings as inherently incomplete and biased. Furthermore, data clearly shows per capita access to state of the art care, time to diagnosis and treatment, quality outcomes, return to productivity and survival rates and longevity are superb in the U.S. for all the major adult diseases. Yes, it is expensive and no, it does not reach all.

Quality costs. Choices are less and security about future coverage isn't what it should be. However, we no longer use divining



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rods and shamans to peer insider organs and bones. Uncle Joe's Kickapoo Joy Juice is illegal and only one in 5,000 yearly screened compounds, at a cost of \$1 billion, makes it to market as a new drug. Almost all come from the U.S.

Quality costs. From horse and buggy to personal motorcars, from feather fans to central air, from mimeograph machines and teletypes to personal computers and internet servers, quality costs. Do you want to go back to shorter, harder and sicker life with folks dropping out of productivity and into consumption of resources because of the failure of timely application of technology and its wonders?

Nothing is free. Demand the econometric analysis of health care which shows the staggering costs of delays and inferior care in socialized health care systems. As Thomas Sowell simply put it, we see politicians tinker with the price of health care by refusing to acknowledge and pay the costs and we should not be "surprised if you get less when you pay less."

Wake up when you hear glibly from those with a fabulous health care plan, and so many other amazing perks, smugly condescend on critics from behind congressional limestone that private insurance could compete fairly in the marketplace ball game. They own the umpires, the bats, the balls, the field, the concession stand, the

parking lot and can write the rules. Yup; batter up! Let's jeopardize 160 million people receiving employer-based benefits for that sake.

The modus operandi of this administration, and many, is posture, pander and then push. Government wearing white healing robes has never resulted in lower costs, higher quality or increased competition. Using free market words is not synonymous with a free market agenda and thinking that the end game is not a single payer system is almost punishable Pollyannaism.

Look instead for a willingness to pay for quality. Look for a true guarantee and a business case analysis to sustain choice and untraveled unfettered access, equitable tax treatment of health care insurance and a nod to possible state based reform while still allowing portability and sound financing.

I am an oncologist. I know emergency wherein failing to act immediately means you lost the best shot at avoiding a disastrous outcome. The cancer cooking in Congress is stinking thinking and this health care business is no emergency. Let's be transparently methodical.

Get informed, get engaged and get involved.

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