

# Healthcare Reform

## A Physician's Perspective

First let me say, I've decided to speak something worth hearing rather than be silent. I am not Joe the Plumber but rather Morgan the Doctor. I received the bulk of my orthopedic education in Buffalo, NY from Canadian physicians. Barack Obama's health agenda is being pushed forward by rhetoric without substance. Even a goose has the sense to pick corn from rocks. America must realize that we can not spend our way to prosperity. The current democratic health care proposal will effectively remove America's last great economic engine, and bring us literally to our knees. Look around, health care is the largest employer in many communities. If passed, Barrack's plan will produce a rapid and dramatic shift to a single payer and physically harm what is left of the middle class. Face it, most middle class Americans desire portability of their health care plan and protection should they be struck by catastrophic events. Barrack's recipe will create a brain drain in the medical field worsening our current doctor deficit.

Most physicians believe that we have a sacred trust. Most of us doctor's realize, like John Paul II, "That human life is precious from its beginning to its natural end". We have received formal training to include college, medical school, residency, fellowships, and continuing medical education requirements that far exceed Barack's education. Furthermore, those of us in the trenches, serving the public in private practice have learned business. Those of us still in practice have demonstrated an understanding of fiscal responsibility.

Inexpensive solutions to this "purported health care crisis" include tort reform. Although government considers malpractice litigation an emotional issue for physicians— American society must realize its economic impact. Liability insurance and defensive medicine cost combined exceed 30 billion dollars a year. No Barack, it is not good enough for you to ask us physicians to simply relax and lighten up. Remember we are responsible and we have worked to get where we are. We did not buy our votes with promises of wealth redistribution which is essentially taxation without representation.

Government should provide catastrophic coverage at Medicare rates.

For the uninsured, our government should allow doctors to donate time at organized health clinics, which could be housed at our current VA hospitals. In exchange for the equivalent of one weekend per month these physicians would receive government malpractice insurance and the ability to write off bad debt. This concept would be analogous to a Medical National Guard and pump "new blood" into the VA systems, raising them as centers of excellence.

Historically government is responsible for our current circumstance. Since 1942 individuals were discouraged from buying insurance when premiums were made

deductible to employers-- not to individuals. Nixon's HMO act of 1973 basically eliminated the market for affordable individual health insurance. Support for this legislation came from an unholy alliance of liberal democrats and AMA lobbyists. What the American public may not know is only 35% of doctors belong to the AMA. Don't be lulled into believing that most physicians have given their stamp of approval to Obama's plan. If you don't believe me, ask your personal physician or surgeon. Individuals need tax deductions for health care.

Tentative solutions must consider undoing past legislation while removing lobbyist input. The current players include health care insurance lobbyists, pharmaceutical lobbyists, hospital lobbyists, and yes, even Wal-Mart. He who pays the piper gets to pick the tune. You should ask yourself why Wal-Mart supports health care reform. Could it be that Wal-Mart's increased employee benefits would be more than repaid by their many planned doc-in-a-boxes across the country? I am convinced that a task force led by MD congressmen and MD senators with private and university MD's can outline outcome base measured approaches to effectively deliver healthcare. By the way, health care is delivered by doctors, physician extenders, and nurses, not politicians. Health care dollars should go to providing care not managing care.

Thomas Jefferson wrote "If we can prevent the government from wasting the labors of the people, under the pretense of taking care of them, they must become happy".

My 11 year old daughter, Jeanne Morgan (1 of 4 adopted Asian orphans), told me that I should explain this in a way that even Barack's girls can understand. Summarized: If Barack's plan is passed, the best I can hope for is that my fellow MD's will band together and simply treat each other, and we'll be left to pray for the health of our children and grandchildren. God Bless America.

